

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 115

DECEMBER 2021

A DAY OF INFAMY 80 Years Ago



Inside this Issue...

- LCI-713 restoration and updates
- Gator Navy hatched to strike back
- Paintings and art by LCI sailors

Aftermath of the Japanese sneak attack on these three stricken U.S battleships; from left to right: West Virginia (BB-48), Tennessee (BB-43), and the Arizona (BB-39).



The Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum

Home of the LCI-713

MISSION

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

Info



Website

www.amphibiousforces.org



Instagram

www.instagram.com/lci713



Facebook

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 Association and the AFMM.

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



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

MISSION

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

usslci.org



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

ABOUT US

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

THE STORIES

- Featured Stories
- Story Archive
- Share Your Story

THE ELSIE ITEM

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

THE LCI EXPERIENCE

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

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

Your Story



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

General guidance on sharing your story can be downloaded from the Association website: usslci.org/share-your-story/. 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.

Changing Times

Message from the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum President

The era of COVID has certainly changed many things. For the LCI-713 it means that our flow of visitors to the ship has dropped significantly. The good news is that support of our efforts has remained very strong. Our thanks to all the members in our organization who help keep the money flowing. You are the best!

As you'll see in this issue, we have made some significant improvements to the ship this year and have made a couple of significant acquisitions. We rarely spend much acquiring things but sometimes there are opportunities that we just cannot pass up. We spent \$5,000 to acquire a very rare complete Oerlikon 20mm setup, including the mount, gun, shields and all those hard-to-find parts. Our sincere thanks to the Winston Oregon VFW post for parting with this beloved historical marker. It is being refurbished onsite and is soon to be installed in the #3 tub. We also acquired a very rare Webb Perfection oven for the galley. This item was donated, but we paid \$700 for the shipping. The new oven is installed in the galley and looking great! Our oven mock-ups have been retired.

More good news: our fabulous crew has been expanding! We have added both regular Saturday volunteers as well as behind the scenes volunteers who work offsite. Their contributions have been enormous.

We remain very frugal with our expenditures: many of the larger restoration items are donated. By far, our largest expense each year is our insurance, which runs approximately \$10,000. Thanks to all of you our income has been exceeding our expenditures, so our bottom fund is still slowly building up.

Our ship is now 77 years old! Please help us preserve her for future generations. We cannot afford to forget our history. Historical instruction seems to be a rarity nowadays.

Thank you all very much!



AFMM President



Yes, I want to help launch the LCI 713!

- Make a donation to the AFMM by year's end.
- Become a member or upgrade your membership level.
- Purchase a membership for your family or friends this holiday season.
- Sign up to volunteer
- Include us in your will, living trust, life insurance proceeds or retirement plan.

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

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

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Vet (Y) or (N) _____

LCI or Ship affiliation _____ Branch/rank _____

(You may also contribute online via our website)

- 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 _____

Comments _____

Observations from Officers Country

from Robert E. Wright Jr.

USS LCI Association Annual Reunion 2021 was CANCELLED

With disappointment, the LCI Association Reunion planned with the World War II Museum in New Orleans was cancelled due to the Covid situation in that city. A 2022 reunion has not been scheduled, but we will make an attempt to have one if there are members or family members who wish to attend. Also, we were contacted by the National WWII Memorial in Washington D.C. requesting any of our members who participated in the Normandy landings attend the June 6th 2021 commemoration ceremony. Unfortunately they did not give us enough notice to make the necessary arrangements. If any veteran or their family would like to participate in next year's ceremony on June 6th 2022, or in attending a 2022 LCI reunion please contact me by US Mail or email.

Membership Renewals 2022

Hopefully the US Mail will deliver this 115th edition of the ELSIE Item to you before Thanksgiving. Be advised, I will also mail the individual 2022 membership renewal notices right after Thanksgiving. Please take the time to return them when they arrive at your door. We appreciate your loyal support which has enabled this Association to continue to tell the stories of the LCI sailors in WWII.

Some final thoughts, looking forward to ELSIE ITEM 116

This is the 115th edition of the ELSIE ITEM. I remember when we got to Issue 70, the thinking that we were close the end. 45 issues later, we are still finding more fascinating tales of those little LCIs. Every year we are contacted by numerous individuals and researchers who are trying to find factual stories of individual crewmen and the LCI's historical role in WWII. Because of your support we will continue to search, find, record and publicize these stories.

To our Brothers of the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum

This joint Issue contains the ELSIE ITEM 115 and the DECK LOG of the LCI(L) 713. For the past 4 years we have been assisting the AFMM in their laudable endeavor to restore the last known, U.S. Navy Landing Craft, Infantry, still afloat. While the Covid-19 situation has caused delays in their restoration efforts, they remain committed to the task of restoring your heritage. Please support their efforts.

As 2021 comes to an end, we see that the world has changed, but our hope for a better tomorrow for ourselves and love one's still lives in our hearts. I wish everyone, Good Health and the all of the Happiness that the Holiday Season brings. - Robert E. Wright Jr., President



Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

This issue of *Elsie Item and the Deck Log Of The USS LCI(L) 713* marks the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Anyone over the of age 85 remembers that day vividly.

Whenever I interview a WWII veteran, my first question is “Where were you when you first heard Pearl Harbor had been attacked?” On one occasion my interviewee said, “Pearl Harbor!”

His name was Robert Hodenson. He was on the USS *Whitney* (AD-4) that day. For the next several months Hodenson and the crew of the *Whitney* assisted destroyers and other vessels damaged during the attack. In 1944 Fire Controlman 2/c Hodenson was transferred to a new Sumner Class destroyer the USS *Hugh W. Hadley* (DD-774). He survived a kamikaze attack at Okinawa that nearly sank the *Hadley*. He shared his stories with me and provided an oral history with the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas before passing away in 2012. His stories live on.

The stories of the fallen at Pearl Harbor were mostly lost that day. Now they are being told by a writers group called Stories Behind the Stars. Their mission is to tell the stories of all the fallen Gold Star Americans – over 400,000 – in WWII. It is a daunting task that must be accomplished in segments. So far, all 1,502 Americans who died on D-Day have been memorialized on



Robert Hodenson FC2/c returned to Pearl Harbor for an annual memorial event. He passed away in 2012.

www.Fold3.com. Now the group is writing memorials for all those who died at Pearl Harbor. I'm working on a story of a 23-year-old sailor from Kentucky who died on the *Arizona*. Wand B. Doyle sensed the future of war with Japan. He wrote home, “If you read where the *Arizona* went down, you can say I went down with her.”

Telling these stories is important to history. In this issue you'll read how Japan's attack on December 7th created the need for a massive and versatile amphibious force.

Editor's Note: *Elsie Item* Chaplain Judi Mayfield passed away recently. She had provided a Chaplain's Corner column for the past two issues of *Elsie Item*. Our condolences go out to her husband, family, and friends.

For this issue I have repeated a Chaplain's Corner column by Abe Lorenzo that appeared in *Elsie Item* from about five years ago.

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

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Keep On Keeping On

NASB

Philippians 4:13, Phil 4:13, Matt 14:25-29,
Psalms 27:1, Psalm 148:18, Acts 2:21.

After my recent visit to the LCI 713 and attending the National reunion my mind recalled a poem by Edgar Albert Guest, "It Couldn't Be Done" published in 1917. It seems to fit the dedicated and tireless work done by those involved in the restoration of LCI 713. So I dedicate Edgar Guest's words to you who have dedicated your mental and physical resources to the establishment of the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum.

Somebody said that it couldn't be done

But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one

Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;

At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat

And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,

There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,

The dangers that wait to assail you.

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,

Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

I believe that God approves of the work you are doing to keep the memory of our shipmates alive and if it is a work approved by God, you can say with Paul the Apostle "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Phil 4:13.

I have a book by John Ortberg titled "You Can't Walk on Water Unless Get Out of the Boat". The title is based on St Peter's experience recorded in Matt 14:25-29. This reminds me of my shipmates doing the work of restoring the LCI 713. They step out and with the help of God perform what some might say "You'll never do that. At least, no one has ever done it." As I think of this, my mind goes to what the Bible says as follows: King David in Psalms 27:1 said "The Lord is my strength and salvation." Psalm 148:18 says "The Lord is near to all who call on Him". St Peter who had firsthand experience states in Acts 2:21 "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved". I believe as promised by the Lord God that he has been and will continue to be present and available as our shipmates trust him for wisdom and strength to do what some may have said couldn't be done. Again I say, keep on with your labor of love. It doesn't go unnoticed.

Ebenezer (I Samuel 7:12)

RM-1/C Abe Laurenzo LCI 47, 409



In Memoriam

LCI 341 & LSM 448

Leroy Worcester

LCI 422

James Mansfield

LCI 595

Wayne Floura

LCI 805

Joseph Miller

LCI 944

Ralph Rayner



AFMM Restoration Updates



Water level at -9inches on USGS gauge. Tide varies 3 feet daily and can range from minus to plus 25 feet in a year.



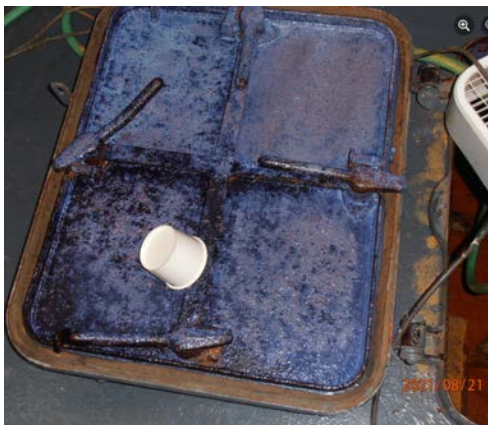
After steering task. Parts are moving, except rudders.



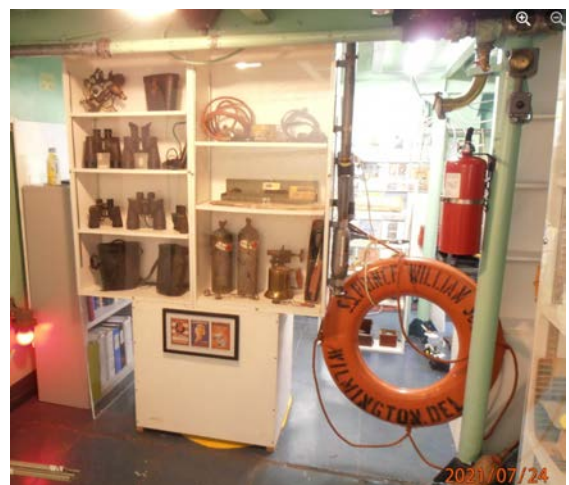
Heavier air compressor to drive the Master Blaster. Since nothing goes into the river, wiser paint removal methods are utilized.



Troop 4 converted to storage. Low overhead and visitor safety made this a priority.



Stores hatch in Troop 2 is corrosealed to stop the rust.



A portion of Troop 4 is still open for displays.

AFMM Restoration Updates



Webb Perfection stove acquired. NOT operational, yet looking good.



Flushing system for commode and urinal in ramp room for 'display only'.



Our 713 was included in a PBS News story about working women in WWII



Mess ware donation



Stateroom locker restoration



Engine room parts acquired

OERLIKON 20mm – Took 11 Years for AFMM to Acquire

Rich Lovell FTM1/FC1 retired



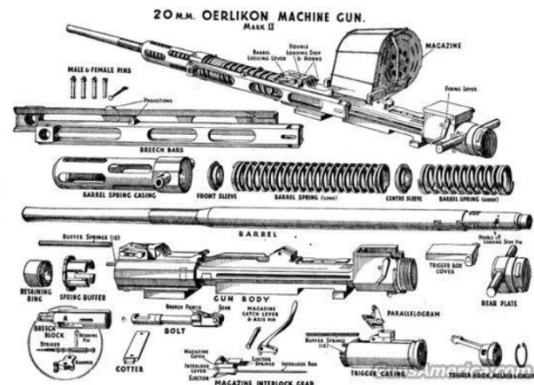
This was the mount at the VFW Lodge in Winston Oregon in 2010. Larry B. took a lot of photos, and the long range goal to acquire was underway.

Rick, Mark, Steve, Jerry, and others visited VFW and shared the LCI -713 story with them. At the VFW, it took research to ensure transfer was permitted from the original donor. An agreement was made that was beneficial to all.

The total assembly weight of a MK 10 is about eleven hundred pounds, fully assembled. It took a crew and lots of careful rigging to disassemble and safely transport this unit.



The ½” plate shields and arms contribute 250 pounds to the weight. The older version MK 4 would have been 600 pounds heavier. Once careful cleaning and restoration has been performed, Jerry has arranged a special service project to transfer the gun and the rebuilt windlass engine by crane to our ship.



Notes from the VP:

Greetings from the Pacific Northwest. Fall is coming in like a lion. Fires are decreasing and rain is increasing. Rick is on an extended work mission in New Mexico and working 12-hour days at times, so I am dropping all a line. The Pandemic has had a large effect on our work practices, health, and safety. Still, we have managed to work on the *LCI 713* and improve this 77-year-old gal.

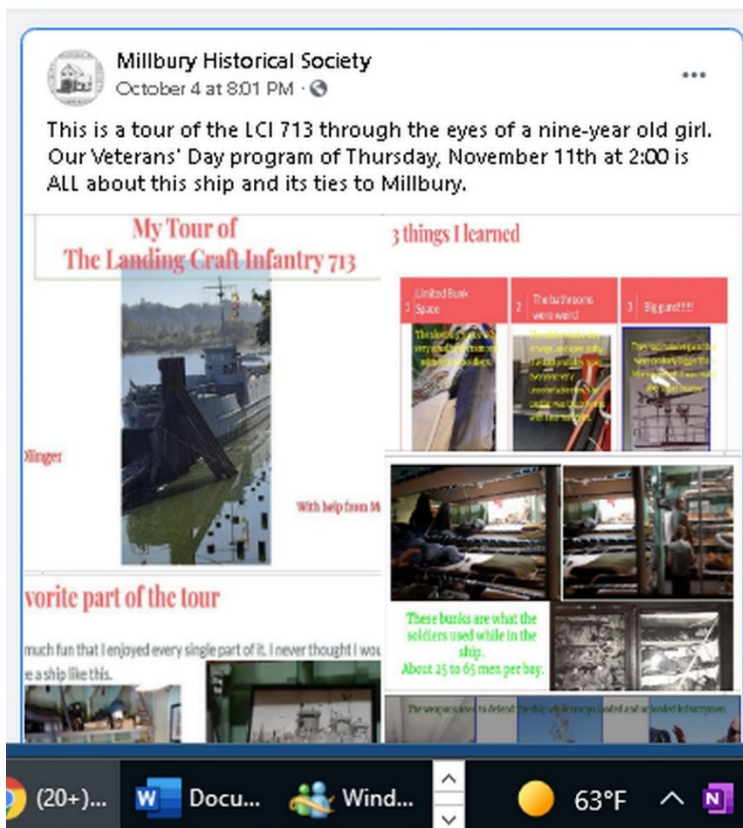
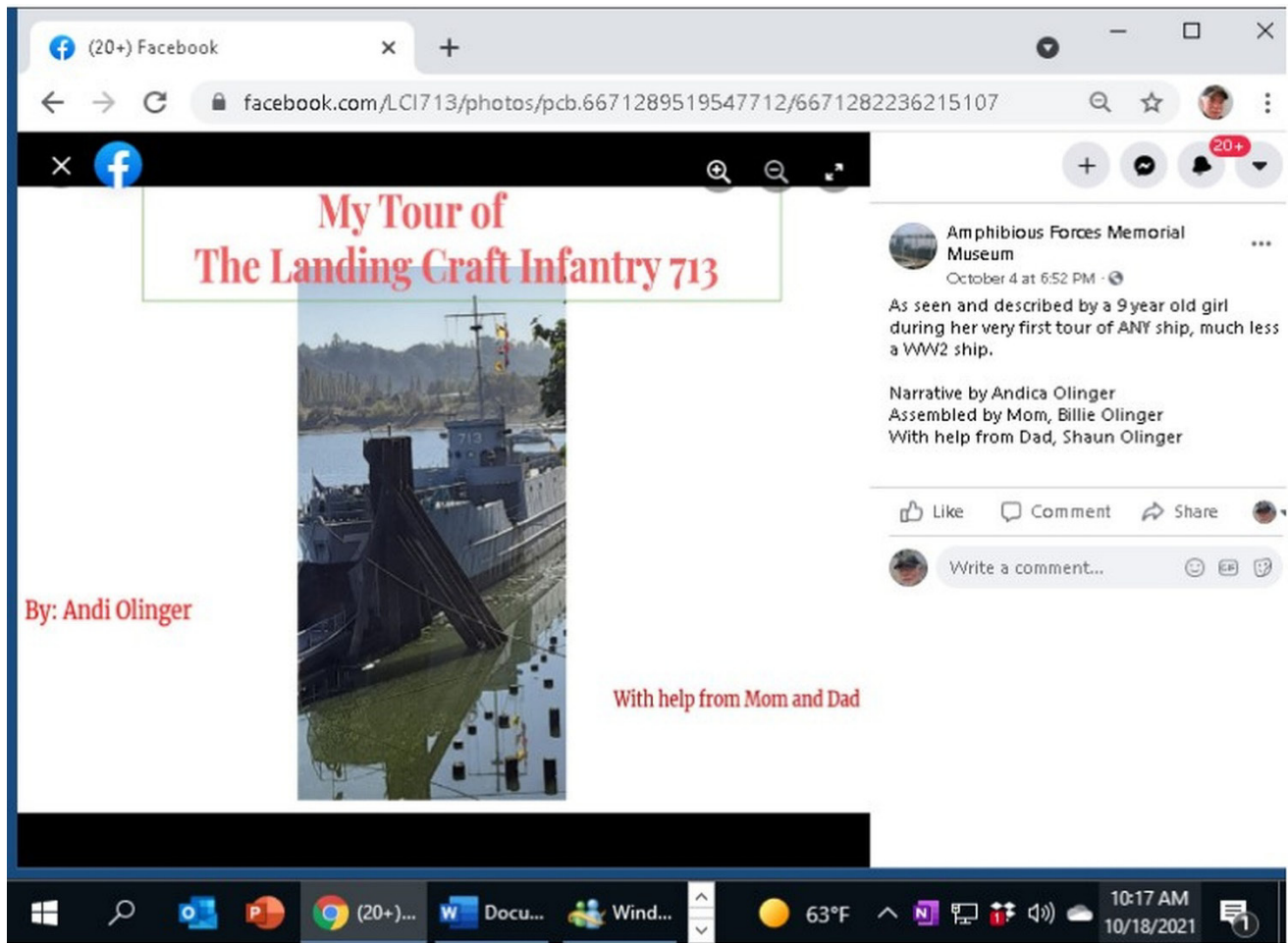


Recently, 9-year-old girl, Andi Olinger, toured *LCI 713*. This was her first time on board a ship. Her family assisted her in developing a photo library tour for Facebook. This was shared on our [Facebook.com/LCI 713](https://www.facebook.com/LCI713) page and with the Millbury, MA Historical Museum. They are planning to utilize her Facebook post on Veterans Day 11/11/21 during their program (next page) honoring their million-dollar fund raiser to build this ship in WWII. Showing the ship through her eyes will hopefully inspire more of our younger



generation to research the LCI history.

Photos above depict the plaques presented during commissioning ceremony on 18 Sept. 1944. Those plaques and the news story are now on the *713* bulkhead outside the officers mess. Mark, Jerry, Rick and Steve commemorated commissioning day this year with a 77-year birthday cake.



These are Andi Olinger's photos of the *LCI 713* that have been posted and shared through Facebook pages on *LCI 713* and Millbury Historical Society. With the help of her parents, she created a 25-page library of photos and captions that provides a wonderful photo tour of the ship from bow to stern. You'll go inside the conning tower, bosun locker, bunk room, galley, officers mess, "those weird bathrooms," and more.

Her captions show how the younger generation can get excited about WWII naval history. She wants to tour *PT 658* next.

Her Facebook tour is being used by the Millbury Historical Society to promote their special anniversary event on Veterans Day.



Special Veterans' Day Program of ***The Millbury Historical Society!***

Thursday, November 11th at 2:00 P.M.

V.F.W. (Charles F. Minney Post) 16 South Main Street

Millbury's Million-Dollar World War II Landing Craft!!

Who Knew?

Be proud, little Town of Millbury, because in August of 1944, your seven-thousand residents (one-thousand of whom were in the Armed Forces) raised over one million dollars in the Fifth War Bond Drive of the war! Enough to sponsor its very own Landing Craft: the ***LCI (L) 713!***

Join us and discover how this long-forgotten, patriotic feat was accomplished by our town! Learn where the idea arose, how the funds were raised, when the ship was commissioned, and where it is TODAY!

Free Admission. Social-distancing will be observed. Lots of room to spread out!

Japan Lays a Gator Egg

By Jeff Veesebmeyer

The Attack on Pearl Harbor changed the U.S. strategic outlook overnight. Stopping Japan's Pacific campaign would require an amphibious fleet. It was clear that the key to victory would require ramping up our amphibious capabilities. Gators were born.

At the outset there were two amphibious corps in the United States armed services. They were combined Army-Marine units controlled by the Navy. In the Pacific they consisted of the 3rd Army Division and 2nd Marine Division. The Amphibious corps in the Atlantic was made up of the 1st Army Division and 1st Marine Division. These units represented the total amphibious capability in January of 1942. They had been trained for river crossings and small raids on "boats."

Amphibious operations on the scale of invading Africa, Italy, Europe, and hundreds of islands in the Pacific had never been envisioned. More troops had to be trained for amphibious landings. Amphibious ships had to be built for transporting these men, their machines, and tons of supplies.

Navy planners realized early in the war that beach landings would be required for invading foreign shores. Landing large numbers of troops and equipment while under fire required specialized training for it to be successful. The order first went out to build an amphibious force in 1942. Carrying the war to Europe and the Pacific would require landing tens of thousands of men and their equipment on beaches. The

Amphibious Training Command (ATC) was created in March of that year. It began with an eight-man staff, no equipment or even office space.



WWII classroom instruction at the Amphibious Training Center in Little Creek, Virginia.

The Little Creek Amphibious base became a beehive of activity throughout the war. Over 360,000 Navy, Marine and Army personnel passed through the training center. Most training techniques were developed from scratch. By 1945 Little Creek had trained an amphibious force capable of manning 60,000 vessels.

At least as important as the number of hulls was the need to have dozens of new types of ships designed to carry from 36 to 1,500 landing force personnel. A bewildering variety of ships would be needed to handle all the complexities of putting modern ground forces on beaches of varying size, shape, and terrain. Ships were built to carry ships, repair ships and supply ships at sea. The island-hopping nature of the Pacific war necessitated invasion forces operating from friendly ports and newly constructed facilities.

The British developed the original landing craft designs for commando raids

against Germany. The need for different kinds of landing craft soon became obvious. They developed the LCT, LST, and LCI. The most marked need was for large, armored craft capable of crossing the seas. These new class of ships had to deliver many men and heavy equipment while under fire. The LSM (Landing Ship Medium) was born. Training for these “gators of the Pacific,” became the primary focus of the amphibious base at Little Creek.

There were five vessel types using the base for training... the LSM (Landing Ship Medium), LCU (Landing Craft Utility), LCI (Landing Craft Infantry), LCM (Landing Craft Mechanized), and LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel).

Other training bases were set up at Solomons, Maryland, Morro Bay, California, and Fort Pierce, Florida. Shipyards were transformed to building these specialized flat-bottomed vessels. They would churn out thousands of amphibious ships and landing craft while working around the clock shifts for the next three years.

The craft designations were assigned to vessels under 200 feet. That size vessel was considered a boat in the U.S. Navy. They were never intended for crossing large bodies of water.

“You can put a boat on a ship, but you can’t put a ship on a boat.”

The U.S. version of the British LCI was initially built in three sections. It would be shipped to a war zone and assembled there. Production on the first LCI’s began in July

1942. The *LCI-209* was first to be commissioned on 1 October 1942. It was followed by *LCI-1*. They were fully assembled and went for sea trials in the Atlantic. None of the LCIs were ever named. They weren’t considered ships. They just got numbers. Crews took it upon themselves to name their ships.

When eight more LCIs were ready to sail, they were sent from Norfolk to Bermuda. These flat-bottomed craft weathered Force 4 winds. They were declared both “sea and sick worthy.” Crews had nicknamed their little ships “Lousy Craft Indeed.” Now they were ships indeed. The moniker “Elsie Item” became more appropriate. The crew of *209* named their ship the “*Ugly Duckling*.” (Note logo on hull below)



The *LCI 209* would participate in operations at North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, and Normandy. The *209* would end up in the Chinese Navy after the war. It was sold to a Chinese businessman and was still afloat in 1951 when he offered his ship to the U.S. for the Korean War. That first ever USS LCI had quite a career.

Unfortunately, the war wasn’t waiting for the LCI-1 Class of ships to reach the Pacific Theater. An invasion of Guadalcanal was urgent in August of 1942. The Japanese airfield being constructed there had to be captured. The 1st Division Marines had to

make do with 48 LCMs, 116 LCVs plus some barges and pontoons to land their troops, equipment and supplies.



LCM lands Marines on Guadalcanal, launched from President Jackson (AP-37).

Fortunately, the landings went mostly unopposed. The small Japanese garrison and construction crews retreated into the jungle when the naval bombardment began. But the Japanese wanted their airfield back. They counter attacked by land, sea, and air for the next six months. This became one of the costliest battles of the war.

The first combat mission for the LCIs was in Operation Torch. Fifty LCIs participated in the landings at north Africa in November of 1942. These ships played roles in the Mediterranean campaigns and during the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

LCI classes of ships evolved throughout the war. The square conn became round. The side ramps gave way to the open bow ramp. More guns and crew were added to become LCI(G)s. Mortars were added and became LCI(M)s. Rockets were added and redesignated LCI(R)s. They

made smoke, delivered mail, transported wounded and patrolled rivers. LCIs became one of the most versatile ships in the Navy.

Eighty years ago, the U.S. Navy got a wakeup call. Within two years the U.S. Amphibious forces went from zero to thousands of ships that could land troops anywhere in the world. The Gator Navy was hatched on 7 December 1941.



LCI(L) 14 was among the first ships launched in the LCI Class-1. Laid down September of 1942 at New York Ship Building. Members of the 3rd Division waving as they pull out of Bizerte Tunisia on 2 July 1943.





The keel is laid for LCI(L) 315 at Port Newark, New Jersey, on 10 August 1942. This was a construction site for Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Company, a major builder of LCIs during the war. Over half the Navy would become amphibious. NARA 19LCM-LCI(L) 315.

The price for building the ships varied from place to place. Part of the costs had to do with shipping building materials from one location to another. In other cases, the government might require changes to the delivery date, forcing the builders to pay for express shipping and overtime for employees. The average cost for an LCI(L) produced by Albina in mid-1944 was \$252,680. Lawley had initially estimated the cost of an LCS(L) at \$275,000, but the government renegotiated the price downward to \$263,000. Availability of supplies, shipping, labor contracts and other factors determined the relative costs of the ships at different yards.

Although the cost was higher on the West Coast, the ships produced on the East Coast had to make the trip from Boston south through the Panama Canal and then up to San Diego, prior to heading to the war zone. The cost of this trip still made it practical to produce ships on the West Coast, even though they were more expensive. Within six years of their launching, many of the ships were sold off as surplus for a price of about \$10,000-\$11,000 each. Some were scrapped, while others were put to use in the fishing fleets.

Images of War

Emotions of Fleeting Minutes Captured through Pen and Brush

Edited by Robert E. Wright Jr



Bizerte (left) by Ens. Mitchell Jamieson USNR.

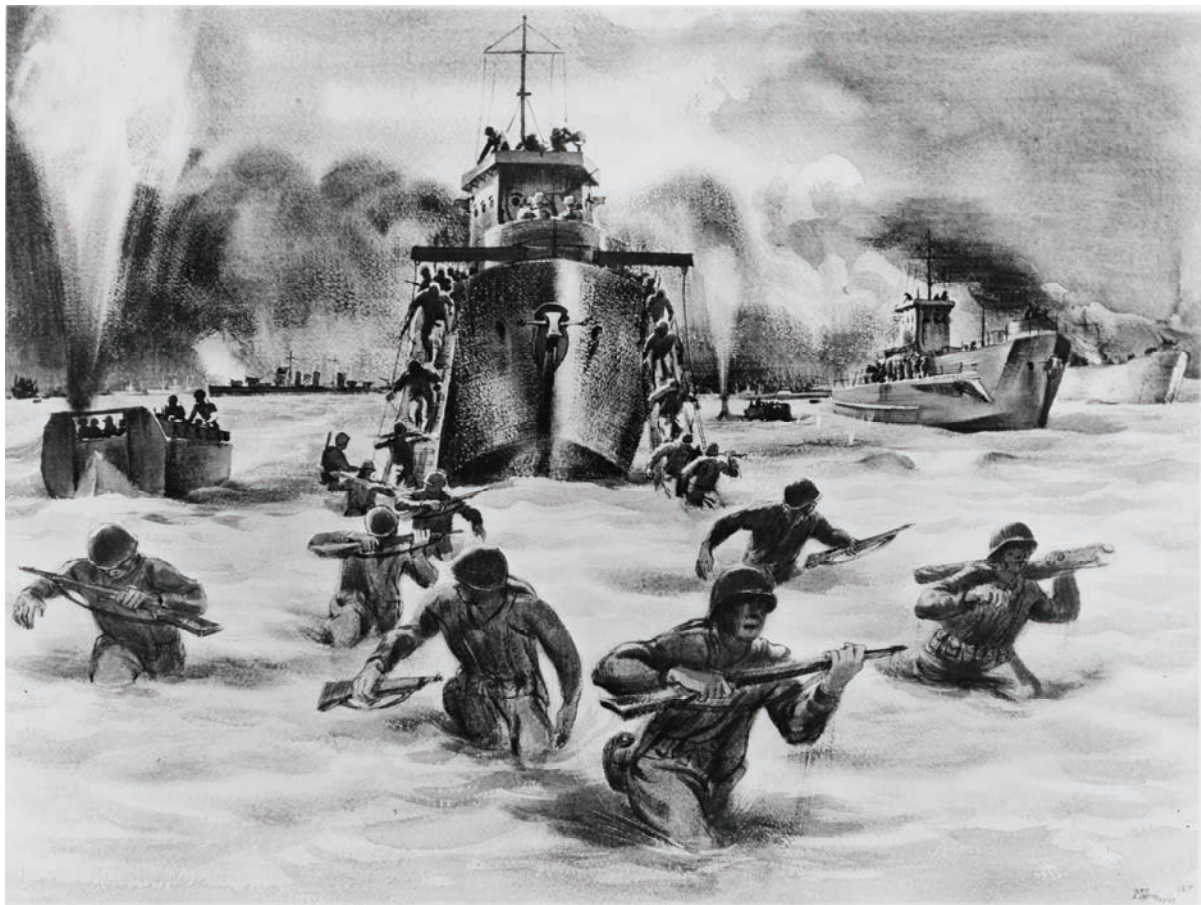
Mitchell Jamison was from Maryland and was an established commercial artist before the war. His tour of duty included amphibious training, convoy operations to North Africa, the first wave at Sicily and the landings in France. He wrote, *"I have confined my paintings to what I have experienced and know to be strictly true,..."*



Hot Moment off Sicily (above) by CBM Hunter Wood USCG.



Digging In (above) by Mitchell Jamieson is a scene from the night landings on the island of Sicily, with army personnel ashore establishing a communication post while an LCI in the background unloads. ***Assault Wave*** (below) by Mitchell Jamieson is his vivid recollection of the Army assault wave going ashore at Salerno





Steward Mate J.R. Smith
by Tore Asplund

You usually find portraits of high ranking officers but combat artists often painted pictures of individual crewmen who captured their attention. On an LCI in combat and landing everyone was assigned to a job that may have had little to do with their rating and more with their ability. Steward Smith's was on a gun crew of USCG manned LCI(L) 348. Interestingly, the photograph below is of this same LCI crew member taken after the Normandy landings.

(right) Two Ohio Coast Guardsmen John R. Smith, on the left, and Daniel J. Kaczorowski stand at their gun aboard a Coast Guard-manned invasion transport on which they served during the invasion of Normandy. Smith, steward's mate, third class, also served during assaults against North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

- USCG Public Relations





General Quarters on an LCI (left)

And Going in Under Fire (below)
by Herman Vestal BM1/c USCG

These are a few of his many vivid recollections from the assault on Normandy. Both images reflect the determination that the crews displayed in the landings. The intensity of General Quarters is offset by the humor of the one sailor missing his pants.



Aftermath of the Landings and Resolve to return to the battle



***Coast Guard Combat Artist
Herman B. Vestal***

H. B. Vestal of New York City served on an LCI during the landings on the Normandy coast sketching events of the battle as he saw them under fire. Before the war, Vestal studied at the Yale School of Fine Arts, the National Academy and Pratt Institute. He had served for 3 years in the merchant marine. He lives in New York City.
- USCG Public Relations



Burnt Out LCT on American Beach

by Mitchell Jamieson

From other Photographs of this scene you can identify LCI(L) 497 as the ship in the background.



The Battered Amphibian

by Dwight Shepler

A painting of LCI(L) 493 at the Navy Repair base at Dartmouth, England, 1944

Making Smoke at Night
by John J. Floherty,
Chief Specialist USCG

The scene shows LCIs generating smoke and Anti Aircraft Fire during a night air raid on the fleet anchorage Kerama Retto, off Okinawa. Floherty was from New York City. He attended Columbia University. He joining the Coast Guard in 1942 and started the war in convoy duty.



Christmas Eve in the Pacific by John J Floherty



The star of peace gleams hopefully over the guns of war in this Christmas drawing by John J. Floherty aboard a Coast Guard manned LST somewhere in the Pacific. A gunner stands his lonely vigil, his eyes alert for signs of the enemy, his thoughts drifting over the thousands of mile of restless sea to his loved ones at home.

- USCG Public Relations

William “Jingles” O’Brien LCI(M) 1088

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

In the last issue of Elsie Item (September 2021) an In Memoriam article was included for Edwin Moser LCI(M) 1088. During research of the 1088 an oral history of his best buddy, William “Jingles” O’Brien, was discovered. His interview provides interesting insight into the wartime service of LCI(M) 1088.

William O’Brien was born and raised in Madison, Wisconsin. He was a big, athletic kid. He loved all sports. Hockey was his favorite. His feet and legs were in perfect harmony when attached to skates. Kids he played hockey with on the Madison lakes called him “jingle legs.” His nickname became “Jingles.” It stuck with him through school, the Navy, personal life, and business.

O’Brien joined the Navy in 1943. He enlisted in Milwaukee and expected to be sent to Great Lakes. They were filled. Then they were going to send his recruit class to Farragut, Idaho and they were filled. “They ended up sending us to Algiers,” said O’Brien. This was a base across the Mississippi River from New Orleans. “They thought we had already been through boot camp.” O’Brien’s group sat for three days with no sea bags, uniforms, or mattresses. Once they were finally issued uniforms and gear, they began boot camp and were graduated in only two and half weeks.

From Algiers he went to Texas. He spent four months in a transportation unit

and then was assigned to the *LCI(L) 1088* in Galveston. This is where he met shipmate and lifelong friend Ed Moser from Rockford Illinois. After sea trials and some training the *1088* was headed for the Panama Canal. Their radioman got sick, and they were ordered back for a replacement. Nobody informed Panama of the delay. The ship and crew had been listed as lost at sea in the Sanibel Island Hurricane that caused massive destruction in October of 1944. “They thought we sank,” said O’Brien.



Shipmates on LCI(M) 1088 and lifelong friends William “Jingles” O’Brien and Ed Moser.

William O'Brien BM2/c: *They switched us over to what they called LCI(M) mortars. We had three emplacements for mortars placed on the well deck. Our main objective was the Okinawa invasion.*



LCI(M) 1088 was converted to a mortar gunboat for the invasion of Okinawa.

The 1088 was at Okinawa from 1 April 1945 to mid-September. There were eight mortar gunboats in the division. Each had a crew of 50 enlisted and 5 officers. O'Brien was a gunner on one of the three-man mortar crews. A mortar round would be taken from the rack and passed forward to O'Brien. "I'd put it in the tube and away she'd go," said O'Brien. Each 4.2 mortar shell weighed about 25 pounds and had a maximum range of 2.7 miles. The range was controlled by the number of powder rings. "Sometimes when I'm putting a shell down the tube you would hear on the radio to cut the powder rings from four to three or four to two. Well, it's too late now, that shell just fired," said O'Brien.

On L-Day 42 LCI(M)s lined the landing beaches and lobbed shells over the first wave landings. Over 20,000 mortar rounds pounded a beach area for 1,000 yards inland and five miles wide. The LCI(M)s were only 1600 yards off the beach but

received no return fire. The landing troops came ashore unopposed too. The airfields were captured in several hours. Then the Marines and Army spread out and tried to find the enemy. The Japanese army was dug-in underground along a line of cliffs and hills called the Suri Line. Their defensive line was a fortress. The battle for Okinawa became the biggest and bloodiest of the Pacific War. The LCI(M)s played an important role in bombarding the flanks of the island-wide defensive line.

The 1088 participated in bombarding of Naha, the capital city of Okinawa. The LCIs were able to enter the harbor and target positions from close range. "Our ship alone threw 800 mortar rounds in there," said O'Brien. Just north of Okinawa is the island of Ie Shima. On 16 April the LCI(M)s softened the landing beach for the Army's 305th and 306th Divisions. This is where famed correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed the following day.

Towards the end of the Okinawan campaign, another small island, Iheya Shima was invaded. A three-day bombardment preceded the landing. On 3 June the 1088 was among 12 LCI(M)s involved in the attack force. Mortar gunboats took position on either side of the landing lanes to screen for fire support. It was thought that there was a garrison of 1,000 troops based in the military facilities. It turned out those troops had been moved to Okinawa. Iheya Shima was secured on invasion day.

William O'Brien: *We went up there for the Iheya invasion. They said we shot off a million dollars, worth of ammunition and there was just one Jap on the island who was home on leave!*

The battle for Okinawa ended on 21 June 1945. But the danger was far from over. Men who were going to shore and looking for souvenirs were being injured or killed by booby traps and hold out Jap snipers. And there was still the threat from kamikazes. Some sailors would go over to the bigger ships, the destroyers, cruisers or battleships, for church services or movies. Those were the targets for kamikazes. O'Brien stayed on his little LCI. "Kamikazes wouldn't fool with us, they were after bigger ships. I saw one that hit the *Birmingham*," said O'Brien. "There wasn't a cloud in the sky. He was up there about 10,000 feet and he was circling around. They couldn't shoot because he was too far up. So finally, he just came down and hit the foc'sle deck which was part of the medical center. It killed fifty-four medical personnel and patients."

William O'Brien: *We shot one down. We were out a ways, making smoke, maybe a mile from the fleet anchorage. We'd get a shot at kamkazes before they got to the big ships. They'd be looking for supply ships, destroyers, and battleships. Finally, sometime in August after the war was over, I went ashore. I hadn't touched land since March.*

After Okinawa and war's end, the *1088* was sent to Japan. They went through the Bungo Suido Straits. It was heavily mined. The mountains on either side had gun emplacements in caves. The guns were on marine railways that could be rolled out, fired, and rolled back in. The little bays had wooden suicide boats with Chrysler engines in them. The bows were packed with dynamite. They planned to run these into our

invading ships. The Japanese were ready for the final battle. The *1088* was assigned to removing mines.

William O'Brien: *We blew up 390 mines and that got to be nerve wracking. At first it was fun. You get out there with M1 rifles and blast away. But after a while every time one of them would go off, your whole body was like a bunch of needles. You just tighten up. Sometimes pieces would fall on the deck after they exploded.*



Shipmates on deck of the LCI(M) 1088.

In the fall of 1945 the crew of *1088* was able to go ashore in Kure. There were some GIs already there. When the Army had arrived, they found hospital personnel who still didn't know the war was over.

William O'Brien: *While we were in Kure they loaded us on trucks and they took us to Hiroshima. We had to stay on the trucks; we couldn't get off. We just drove through. They drove us through for about half an hour or so. That city was really a flattened mess. There was, only one or two buildings that were still standing partially. They were buildings that the Army engineers built in 1934.*

O'Brien weathered two typhoons during his two years on the *1088*. The worst

one was in the Gulf of Mexico. At one point the ship was in the eye. Calm waters there but they knew what was coming at the other side.

William O'Brien: *You're in the typhoon and it is really rough waters. It would be like sitting on top of Edgewood Hill in Madison and I could look down and see the bottom of the hill. And next thing I know I'm on the bottom of the hill and there is a big wave up there. If I was there today, I'd be scared. I never got seasick. Out of our crew of 55 only three of us never got seasick. I had a four-hour watch with a guy on the helm. He was sick and heaving in a bucket.*

O'Brien has fond memories of his shipboard life. The ship was built to hold up 200 troops plus a crew of 25. As a gunboat they had a crew of 55 that were able to spread out in all compartments. Their cook had worked as a chef in a classy hotel. He didn't use the Navy cookbook. He made his own menu items and gave them names nobody could pronounce.

William O'Brien: *We had a chef that was from a big hotel in Sioux City. We had good food and good supply of it. While in Okinawa we had to take mutton from Australia to get beef. Nobody would eat the mutton, so our chef ordered lots of it to get lots of beef. The mutton would be tossed overboard. We had steak four or five times a week.*

O'Brien had enough points to be discharged. When the 1088 got back to the States in 1946 he headed back to his hometown in Madison, Wisconsin. He got a job, played hockey on an adult league, and enjoyed the University of Wisconsin

football home games. He hung out at the Stadium Bar near Camp Randall Stadium on game days. When it came up for sale in 1957, he bought it and called it Jingles Stadium Bar. Football fans and locals just called it Jingles.

His shipmate Ed Moser stopped in whenever he came up from Rockford to see a Badger game. For the next 50 years Badger fans would stop at Jingles before and after home games. After O'Brien sold the bar, the new owner changed the name. People would go watch the Badgers play and after the football game they'd still say, "See you at Jingles."



WWII Navy veteran William "Jingles" O'Brien seen here at Jingles Stadium Bar in 1996. O'Brien owned the famous sports bar near the University of Wisconsin football stadium for 42 years.

Sources: Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center 1999.

Wisconsin State Journal Archives 1996

Edwin Moser photo album

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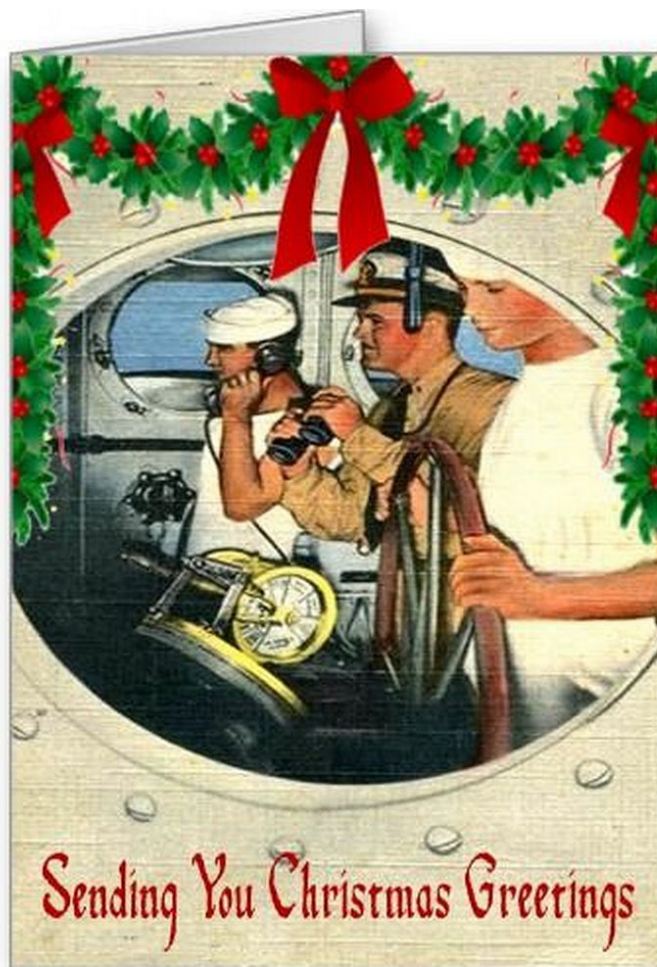
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This Navy themed Christmas Card was sent during WWII – Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and the hope for a reunion get together in the New Year.