

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

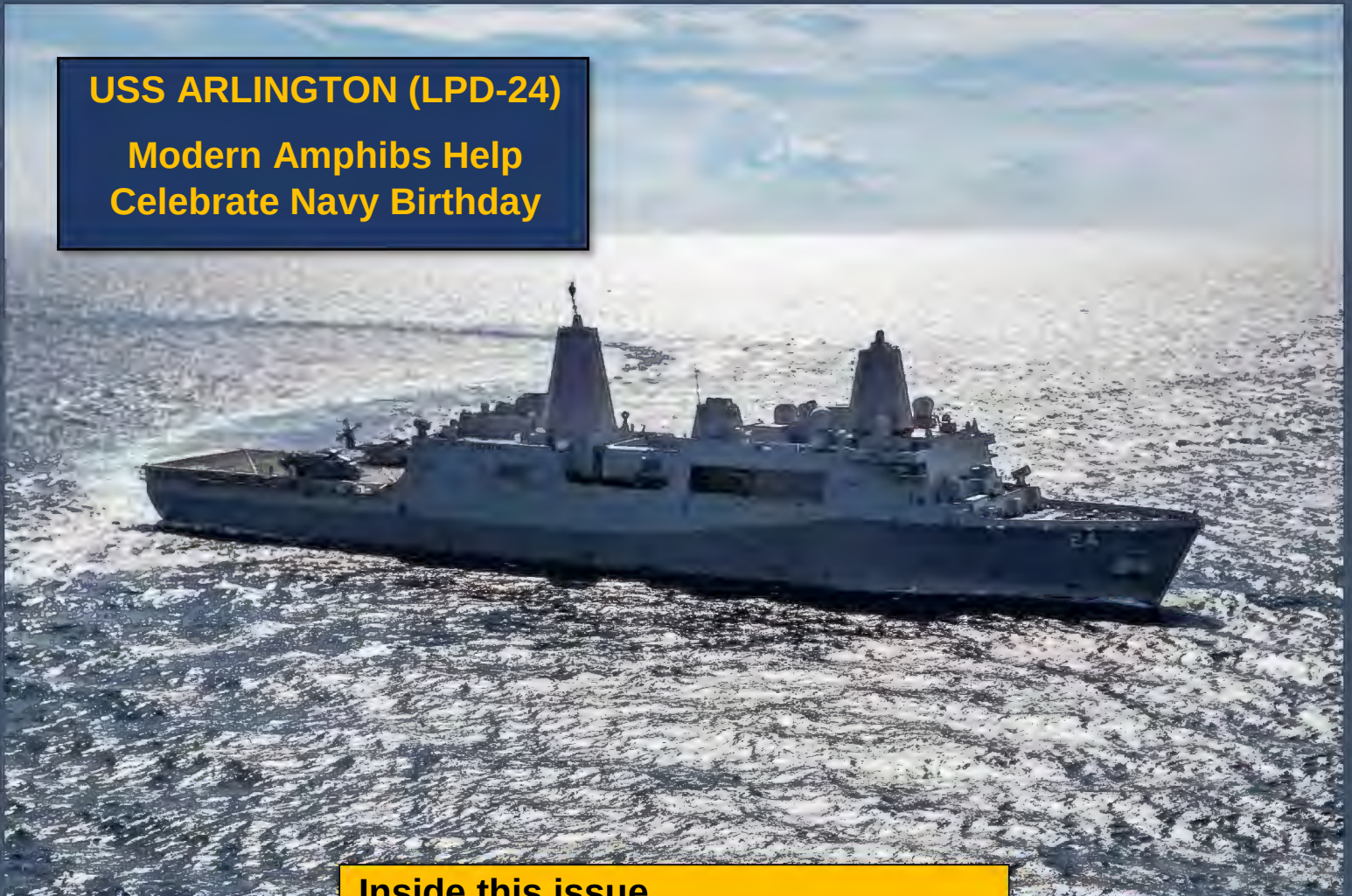


ISSUE 131

WINTER 2025

USS ARLINGTON (LPD-24)

Modern Amphibs Help
Celebrate Navy Birthday



Inside this issue...

- LCI 713 Restoration & updates
- What Happened to war surplus
- Operation Magic Carpet
- U.S. Navy turns 250



Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum

Home of the LCI-713

MISSION

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

INFO

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

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

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



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 on 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.

LCI-713 Currents

Dear AFMM, LCI National Association members and followers,

Seems like time is flying by since our last newsletter. Since then, it has been a painful process. But as of this writing, we are about 80% complete on painting the decks Deck Grey and the interior bulkheads Haze Grey. Everything looks really good. We would also like to paint the hull, but our lease doesn't allow for any over the water painting. We wait until dry-docking for that.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we are working to obtain some more sorely needed 20mm Oerlikon gun mount parts, magazines and other miscellaneous items, like a couple of life rafts. We are still hopeful, and things are slowly inching forward. We are collaborating with the USS John Brown Liberty ship in Baltimore. The Brown is fully operational and a sight to see. They have many of the parts we need and so far, have been willing to share them with us. The only hitch is that it requires a large crane to open the cargo hatch and remove the parts from the ship's hold. They only do this occasionally, so we are keeping our fingers crossed. It will be a significant expense to get the items shipped to Portland.

We are slowly inching forward on the hull as well. We contracted with a shipyard to do a complete hull survey including thickness readings. The good news is that we are in reasonably good shape, with just a few sore spots. Our mission now is to find a repair facility that will work with us. This will probably require hiring a Naval Architect or engineer that will spec-out a repair process, rather than a complete hull replacement. We are very hopeful that we can get to this next phase of restoration.

As always, our primary goal is the hull repair and that remains our focus. We so appreciate your support as that is driving the effort to get the job done. Together we will get the 713 in shape to teach histories lessons to the next generation. In this holiday season of giving and sharing, please help us continue our work.

We wish you all fair winds and following seas!
Hope you have a wonderful Holiday,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rick Holmes

AFMM President

Yes, I want to help launch the LCI 713!

You may also donate online via our website's secure donation page:

www.amphibiousforces.org

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

Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum
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Portland, OR 97239-3871

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

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

LCI or Ship affiliation _____ Branch/rank _____

Other ways you may show your support:

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

My Gift Is: ☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of

Person's name _____

Comments: _____

1991 to 2026

We Begin our Association's 35th Year

Thank you

For the members who made a \$200 donations. I know that the USS LCI books are now in the hands of supporters who help to preserve the history of the LCI.

Membership Renewals: Begin in November 2025

I will mail your individual 2026 membership renewal notices around the middle of November. Please take the time to return yours when it arrives. Since 1991, your membership has enabled the USS LCI National Association to continuously honor and commemorate the service and sacrifices of the sailors aboard the US Navy and Coast Guard Landing Craft Infantry during WWII. Your membership renewal will keep the USS LCI National Association as one of the very few remaining World War II veterans associations.

In 2026 we will continue to print and mail *The ELSIE Item* and *The Deck Log of the LCI 713*.

As some members have noted, the single largest expense of the LCI Association is the continuous publication of The ELSIE ITEM. All the costs of putting this in the hands of our members continue to rise more than the rate of inflation. Our commitment to this publication is based on the printed copy. It is a tangible connection for our members to the service of their family members or friends who served in World War II aboard a United States Navy warship. There is great pride in being able to make that claim. We have chosen to remember and honor these men for answering the call of their country during a time of great peril to the country and to themselves. Some men never returned from The War. Most returned to a quiet life but always remembered their experiences during those war years. Individually they never sought recognition or glory. That belongs exclusively to their comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice. As an association all we have to offer is our commitment to honor and remember all of them by continuing to tell their stories. **Veterans Day** holds a special meaning for our members. On this day we can publicly remember and demonstrate our appreciation for all who served.

As 2025 comes to an end, and 2026 begins...

We can look around our world and see the uncertainty and chaos that seems to have gripped nations everywhere. As individuals, we can only continue to hope and work toward a better tomorrow, as we have always done in the past. I wish everyone good health, and all the happiness that the Holiday Season brings.



Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

The Navy's 250th Birthday and the 80th Anniversary for the end of World War Two have coincided with this issue. It was during the Revolutionary War that a full-time navy became necessary for the nation's security. And it was during WWII that the U.S. Navy grew into the most powerful in the world. Eventually it was the aircraft carriers and submarines that played the biggest roles in winning the war. They employed long range attacks, surprises, and stealth.

I found it interesting that the first naval action of the Revolution involved a small whaling sloop not much bigger than an LCI. Surprise and stealth won the day. See that story inside.

Today's Navy is dominated by large attack carriers and small, fast, versatile vessels. The front cover photo is of USS *Arlington* (LPD-24) an amphibious Landing Platform Dock ship. It was among 10 ships chosen to participate in the Navy's 250 Birthday Celebration on the Delaware River in Philadelphia. There are 36 LPDs operating in the Navy. Each ship can transport 699 Marines their equipment and supplies using helicopters, landing craft, and amphib vehicles for expeditionary warfare. The naval complement is 360 officers and enlisted. It is armed with 30mm and 50 cal. guns, plus two missile launchers. *Arlington's* on-board museum includes

twisted and burnt steel debris recovered from the 911 attack on the Pentagon.



A landing craft enters the well deck of an LPD.

This issue is also the holiday fund raiser for the restoration of *LCI-713*. AFMMs biggest need is to have *713* put in drydock. The back cover of this issue shows what that might look like. The museum submarine USS *Cobia* went in to drydock last summer. This project cost about 1.5 million dollars.

Good day sir,

I am researching hull no.748. My father served on her as a coxswain during the South Pacific campaign. I too am a navy veteran. My hobby is to build scale models of naval vessels and would love to build a replica of 748. Any pics and service records of this vessel would help me a great deal. My father was Thomas F. Keeley.

Thank you, ABE3 T.F. Keeley Jr.

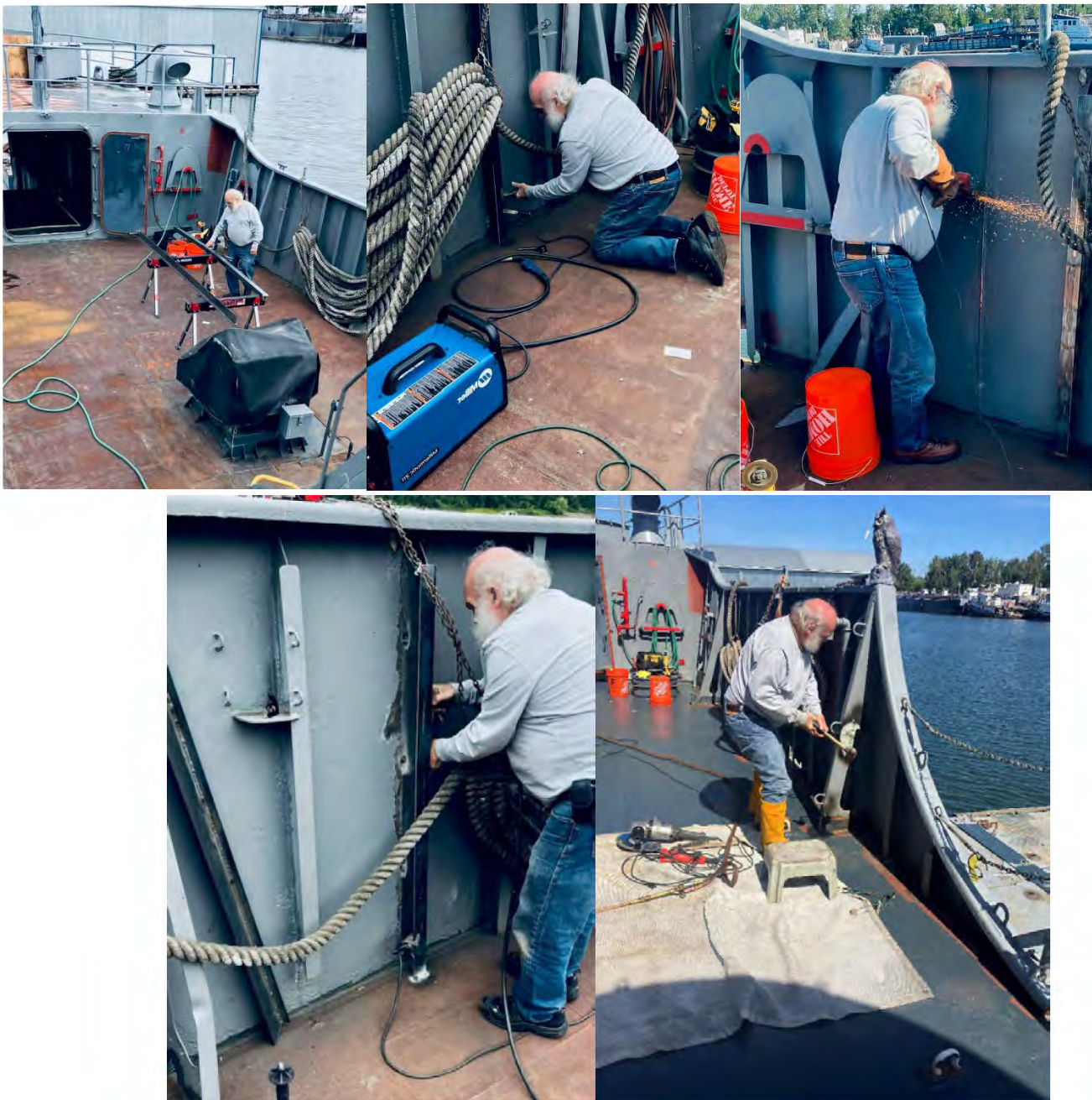
Editors Note: I pointed Tom to Navsource.net and USSLCI.org. He'd appreciate any other help from readers.

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

LCI-713 Restoration Update

By Rick Holmes

We have been a very busy crew! Our primary mission this year has been twofold: repairing wasted metal and painting all the decks and interior bulkheads. The metal repair is mostly on exposed T-bar areas. This entails manufacturing new T-bar by hand, so it looks like WWII, cutting off the old, grinding off the remains, cutting, grinding, and fitting the new pieces, welding them into place and then a final grind to clean up. Also we had to straighten up the main gusset on the bulwark. Quite the tedious process. You'll see in the following pics, Steve Adams, busy doing this stuff. Note the rusty deck prior to painting.



Steve Adams, our master metal worker.

Then there is the painting. On the decks, this has also been quite the process that involved chipping and grinding off most of the old paint, priming, then painting the new Navy Grey color topcoat. The real rub was that in our first two efforts, the paint failed requiring complete re-dos of everything to get it done. We hopefully have the formula right now.



John is haze graying the bulkheads, primer on the gun deck, and touching up the new T-bar.

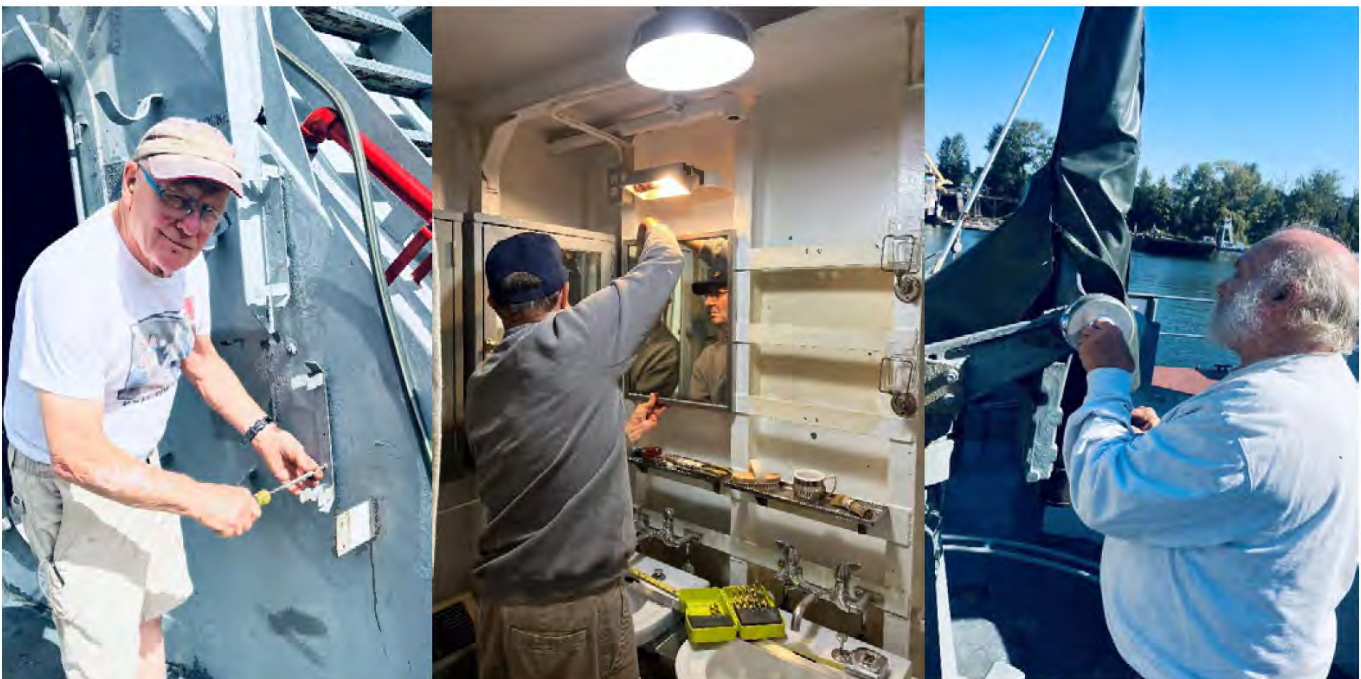


Many hours of wire wheeling on the decks, painting the well deck. Now it's looking good!

And a few other things to report. We spent a lot of time “de-junkifying” which means getting rid of old and unneeded materials. The museum space is back together with the exception of mounting our precious flags (already in glass) on their display boards. We also did some fixture upgrades in the officers’ head and on the well deck.



New accommodation ladder for crew access. Cleaned up Troop 1 and Troop 2 Museums.



Mark is seen installing a beacon light bracket, John is upgrading the officers' head and Steve is repairing the 20mm gun mount spring.

Uncle Sam, Became a Post WWII Junk Dealer

By Bill Leslie

During WWII, the United States spent \$288 billion in 1940 dollars which is equivalent to \$6.5 trillion in 2024 dollars. By the end of the war, much of that spending was just gone. It had been spent on expended bombs, military salaries, and on aid to our Allies. However, some of the money was spent on tangible objects that were still around, things like military bases, buildings, trucks, food supplies, and reportedly, on hundreds of thousands of body bags that weren't needed because of the use of two atomic bombs on Japan. The size of the military shrank rapidly. Our men in uniform wanted to go home, and their families were anxious to see them. Between 1945 and 1947 the U.S. military shrank by 87% - from 11.9 million servicemen to 1.6 million.

While certain things - such as naval ships - could be mothballed, the military reduction was accompanied by an enormous sale of surplus material at a magnitude that has not been seen before. After WWI the military learned that ships, airplanes, and large guns that were mothballed for future military use, became obsolete long before the next war. The military was sensitive as to how they would be perceived. The sales of surplus at the end of WWI for a small fraction of original cost had caused howls from Congress and from civilian populations.

To many in the military, it was better to do nothing than to move quickly and perhaps look foolish. Surplus sales were also delayed by the failure of Congress to define the size of the peacetime armed forces. The Navy and Army (and soon, the Air Force) were reluctant to identify surplus before they

knew the size of their future authorized personnel. And so, they waited on Congress.

After a series of politically motivated fumbles, Congress created the Surplus Property Administration to manage the disposal of an estimated \$90 billion in personal property located in more than 5,000 distinct locations. Members of the Board drew salaries of \$1,000 per month. Perhaps 90% of those assets were in the U.S. Many overseas assets weren't suitable for sale, either because they were needed for the reconstruction of war-torn countries, or because they were strictly suitable for military use, and had little application to civilian use.

The list of items available for sale to the public would have filled a phone book. Some examples included:

- 47 million yards of jute burlap strips in six colors (previously destined to become camouflage)
- a 300,000 square foot plant, complete with airport, in Burlington, N.C.
- LCVP #C-9596, 36 feet long, holed in both sides, located in Attu, Alaska
- 500,000 wrist watches, 57,000 herringbone twill fatigue jackets
- hundreds of Higgins boats, real estate that had held POW camps and Army training camps, ermine skins, thousands of army helmets left over from WWI, 280,374 white surgical gowns, 7,000 ice tongs, and 17,000 horses

To limit the profits of businesses that participated in surplus sales, the government sometimes set ceilings on the prices at which goods could be retailed. When the U.S. Army sold 4,000 rowboats designed for infantry assaults, they set a maximum retail price of \$75. It's unknown whether such

controls were effective – but it seems unlikely.

The government just didn't have the time or the personnel to handle the retail sales of small quantities of goods. At first, most surplus sales were reserved for businesses, although this was later relaxed. That meant that an Army dentist, recently released from the service, couldn't buy his dental equipment from the Army. He typically had to go to a wholesaler of dental equipment who had just purchased the surplus equipment. However, to help him with the purchase, GI loan programs would finance the purchase of equipment to start a business. Items purchased for personal use, such as vehicles, were sold at a designated price. Items intended for resale by businesses were sold based on a written bid.

Eleven designated districts were created, each serving multiple states. District 1, headquartered in Boston, handled assets in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island. District 11, in Seattle Washington, handled sales in Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Washington State. Unfortunately, that meant that an ex-P-51 fighter pilot who traveled hundreds of miles to try to purchase a Piper Cub might be awarded a plane located 500 or more miles away.

Assets overseas had a different hierarchy of claims. First, overseas agencies of the Federal government. Second, reconstruction relief agencies, such as the UNRRA - the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Third, U.S. veterans living overseas, and fourth, Allied governments. This meant that most vehicles present in Europe or The Philippines at the end of the war were turned over to local governments to replace vehicles destroyed in the war. This served to speed the recovery

of a devastated Europe. The French postal service might request 1,000 jeeps, the French railway system a dozen locomotives and 40 rail cars, etc. Extremely few vehicles present overseas at the end of the war made it back to the U.S.A. Stories suggesting an extensive "combat experience" for WWII jeeps are doubtful. A few came back, but it was rare.

Sales of assets to other governments were problematic. In many cases, it was unclear who had the authority to make a decision for a particular city, state, or country. And if a foreign government wanted to buy, what currency was acceptable for payment? And what exchange rate would be used? Overseas sales resulted in some very bizarre results.

- The U.S. sold most assets in one European district to the local government for \$400,000. That government, in turn, quickly sold most of the assets to international private sector companies, who shipped them to USA where they were sold at huge profits.
- In the summer of 1945, President Truman argued for faster sales of surplus to speed the restoration of foreign economies. Although \$5 million in materials in Italy had been identified, just 10% had been designated as suitable for sales to civilians, and little had been released.
- Espiritu Santo, an island in the South Pacific, had been an enormous Allied base with as many as 40,000 soldiers and sailors and eight movie theaters. Espiritu Santo was famously the home of VMF-214, the Black Sheep squadron. After the war, an attempt was made to sell hundreds of vehicles and thousands of cases of equipment to the local government, a joint venture of the French

and the British. The perception was that there was no way that the U.S. was going to ship the assets to another market, and they refused to negotiate a price.

Frustrated, Navy Seabees built a ramp and dumped the surplus into the ocean. That place is now known as Million-Dollar Point, and is a popular location for scuba divers, who find bulldozers, cranes, trucks, and crates of clothing and Coca Cola.

- The 137 bombers and 9 fighters that were interned by the Swiss during WWII were sold to the Swiss for scrap. Hollywood stunt pilot Paul Mantz bought 475 bombers and fighters in the U.S. for \$55,000, or \$115.79 per airplane. He sold the fuel in the tanks for more than that and then sold spare parts around the world for several years. Ultimately, he sold the rest as scrap metal for \$160,000. Mantz died in a plane crash during the filming of the 1965 film *The Flight of the Phoenix*, which starred Jimmy Stuart.

By 1946, Congress had pivoted to another entity, the newly formed War Assets Administration. Some of the assets had little or no value to the private sector, and other items, such as bombs, destroyers, and B-17 bombers, couldn't be sold to just anyone. This left some \$28 billion in personal property suitable for sale to the private sector. A major concern of the Congress was to avoid the disruption of businesses that were returning to the manufacture of products suitable for the private sector. For example, in December 1945 surplus medical supplies were estimated to total 50% of annual U.S. production. Medical suppliers, who had worked so hard to support the war effort, were obviously sensitive to the timing and pricing of sales. To protect U.S. auto manufactures, the Dodge 6X6 trucks, jeeps, and motorcycles that had made their way to

Europe would not be returned to the USA. At least, that was the goal.

Camp Adair, Oregon was typical of the real estate to be sold. It included 89 square miles of land and 1,700 buildings. Adair was rapidly constructed in the year following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and served as a training facility, and briefly as a camp for German and Italian prisoners of war. Following the war, much of the land was repurchased by the farmers who had sold the land to the Army just a few years before. Some buildings were sold for nominal prices and moved to other locations.

What about vehicles?

It was reported that early in 1942, various Federal agencies had descended on new car dealerships and bought almost every vehicle. That meant that cars had just not been available to civilians for years. Service personnel had priority in the purchase of vehicles.

The result was that the number one item desired by veterans after the war was vehicles – preferably a nice, low-mileage sedan, although Harley Davidson motorcycles, Ford and Willys jeeps, and Dodge 6x6 trucks were also sought. The resumption of the manufacturing of civilian vehicles was anticipated by fall, 1945, but production was expected to be just 2 million vehicles a year – less than half the rate of pre-war 1940.

Art Lacey of Milwaukie, Oregon decided that what he needed was airplane wings to cover the pumps at his gas station. Although the government had paid Boeing \$283,000 just two months before for a B-17, Lacey paid just \$1,500 for a B-17. Although he had never flown anything bigger than a single engine Cessna, he took off for a

training flight and crashed the plane while landing. The War Assets Administration simply substituted another plane, B-17G 44-85790 at no charge. This plane had flown for just 50 hours.



Art Lacey's B-17, called Lacey Lady, is being restored at McNary Field (SLE) in Salem, Oregon by the non-profit B-17 Alliance Foundation. It will be featured in a museum of WWII aviation. Current restoration efforts, which can be viewed by visitors, include the ball turret, nacelles, and the cockpit.



Our Allies faced similar issues. In England, Triumph and Norton motorcycles were sold in bunches of five. This placed them out of the reach of individual English buyers, but comfortably within the reach of motorcycle dealers.

As the end of WWII approached, our men and women in uniform wanted to go home. They had dreams – of marrying and starting a family, and for four years they had been saving money to chase those dreams. Their biggest dream was to own a car. If they couldn't afford a nice low mile's sedan, a

jeep, a truck, a motorcycle would do. They wanted transportation like they experienced during the war. Few cars had been produced since 1941, and it would take time for Detroit to restore auto assembly lines. Fortunately, many thought, the army was preparing to sell hundreds of thousands of jeeps, cars, and trucks. Ultimately, after political jousting, the War Assets Administration was charged with managing the surplus. Eleven designated districts were created, each serving multiple states. District 1, headquartered in Boston, handled assets in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island. District 11, in Seattle Washington, handled sales in Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Washington State. Unfortunately, that meant that an ex-corporal living in Seaside, Oregon might be awarded a vehicle in Glasgow, Montana, some 800 miles away.

Stories suggesting an extensive “combat experience” for WWII jeeps purchased as surplus are doubtful. A few came back from overseas, but that was rare. Most were sold to overseas governments. Curiously, one government declined to pay. An enormous base housing 40,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines had been built on Espiritu Santo, an island in the South Pacific. Espiritu Santo was home to the Black Sheep squadron. After the war, an attempt was made to sell hundreds of vehicles, to the local authority, a joint venture of the French and the British. The perception of that government was that there was no way that the U.S. was going to ship the assets to another market, and they refused to negotiate a price, thinking they would be given the vehicles for free. Frustrated, Navy Seabees built a ramp and dumped the surplus into the ocean at a place is now known as Million-Dollar Point. It's a popular place for scuba divers. Divers find

hundreds of bulldozers, cranes, trucks, and jeeps.

Most vehicles offered for purchase in the USA had been in motor pools in one of hundreds of bases in the USA. They ranged from wrecked hulks dating back to 1940, to 1945 new jeeps in the box. (Yes, it was possible to buy a new jeep in a box, although they weren't sold for \$50.)

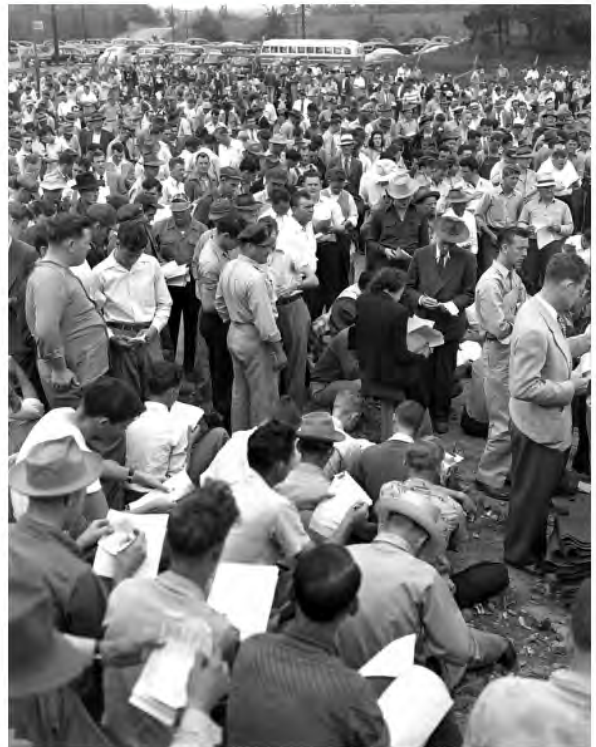
The first claim on vehicle assets was given to Federal government agencies, such as the U.S. Postal Service, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service. Second claim on assets were various state and municipal governments and non-profit organizations such as hospitals and schools. Only after their claims were met could veterans make a grab for a vehicle. Below veterans in the hierarchy were private sector companies, such as auto dealers. Some used car dealers usurped the system by paying veterans \$10 or \$20 to put in a claim for a vehicle. If the veteran was successful, he might own the vehicle for a day. The next day, the vehicle would be on a dealer's lot.

In 1945, the U.S. government disposed of 150,647 trucks in the U.S. This sounds like a large number, but there were four veterans applying for each vehicle. Eighty-thousand servicemen wanted cars, but just 21,000 staff cars, station wagons, and panel trucks were available. Many veterans were willing to settle on a jeep but only 6,555 were sold in 1945, at prices ranging from \$782 for a newer or rebuilt jeep, to \$75 for a wrecked jeep. Vehicles were sold at fixed prices, which were based on a physical evaluation of each vehicle. Many veterans were surprised at the poor condition of their purchases. The tires might be bald, and the battery missing. Motor pools released their worst vehicles and made

them worse by removing anything they thought they might need.

[illegible]

October 1946 invoice for the sale of a 1943 Willys MB, serial 208564, engine #221347, to William Perkins of California for \$405 + \$10



At this sale in Oakridge, California, more than 10,000 veterans showed up, hoping to take home one of 1,500 vehicles.

Bill Leslie is a professional writer and LCI-713 supporter. His stories are published in many different publications. Thanks Bill!



Troops loaded on LCT-748 await short trip to an anchored troop transport in Buckner Bay off Okinawa. They are heading home during Operation Magic Carpet.

Home Alive by 45

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

In 1945 there were over eight million Americans stationed in 55 theaters of war that spanned four continents. They all had the same goal. Survive the war and make it home in time for Christmas 1945.

The War Shipping Administration (WSA) had already been assigned the monumental task of bringing our men and women home. But until Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, most of the ships

needed were assigned to the invasion of Japan.

On September 6, 1945, Operation Magic Carpet was launched. Naval warships of every size and class became part of the largest sealift ever organized. On average the Operation Magic Carpet transported over 22,000 Americans home every day for the next 11 months. And the baby boom began nine months later.

Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall began planning for Magic Carpet in 1943. The plan was set in motion just four days after Japan surrendered.

Aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers and supply ships were quickly converted into troop transport. By October of 1945 there were over 370 United States Navy ships designated for repatriation duties in the Pacific. The Magic Carpet fleet included 222 attack transports, 6 battleships, 18 cruisers, 57 aircraft carriers and 12 hospital ships. Any ship returning home would be carrying troops. Those going back out would be carrying replacement troops for occupation or POWs to be returned to Germany, Italy, China, Korea, and Japan. A half million German and Italian prisoners of war were returned to Europe. The high-speed luxury liners Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary could carry 15,000 troops per trip to New York Harbor. At 30 knots the crossing took only 5 days.



Sailors who are not going home yet watch those who are as they load up on White Beach at Okinawa.

LCIs were too small and too slow to ferry troops 6,000 miles home from the South Pacific. But the amphibious navy was essential to the operation there. Not so much for getting troops across the oceans, but for getting them off the beaches and onto the troop carriers. The versatile LCI, LCS, LCT, and LSM ships could be loaded to the gills

for a short ride from a beach to a troop transport anchored offshore. They could get into remote locations throughout the Pacific to pick up small garrisons of troops and deliver them to larger embarkation sites. Landing craft could transport occupation forces to Japan, China, Korea and islands throughout the Pacific. Japanese POWs were picked up from islands and sent back to Tokyo on landing craft. The versatility of amphibious ships worked against gator sailors. Those ships were needed in the Pacific and critical job ratings were harder to replace on smaller crews. Some men with high points (85 or over) had to wait for a replacement before being released.

The Adjusted Service Rating Score (ASR)

When the war ended, all eight million men and women stationed overseas wanted to go home. General Marshall had an even bigger problem than transporting troops home. He needed a way to determine who would go first. The point system became the scoreboard that every soldier and sailor wanted if they had "high points" and hated if they didn't.

The "Adjusted Service Rating Score" (ASR), was also known as the "points system." It was used by the U.S. Army to determine which soldiers were eligible to be sent home for discharge after World War II in Europe. Points were earned for factors like months of service, overseas service, decorations, medals, campaign participation, and children. Initially an enlisted man needed 85 points to be eligible for repatriation.

The Readjustment Regulations were first introduced on September 15, 1944.

These were revised February 15, 1945, and again on March 5, 1945. The rules were simple in general principle: "those who had fought longest and hardest should be returned home first for discharge. The scores were determined by four measurements.

How to Score Points	
Points for discharge from the Army will be totalled as follows:	
1. Each month in service.....	1 Point
2. Each month in service overseas.....	1 Point
3. Each combat award (includes each medal and each battle participation star).....	5 Points
4. Each dependent child under 18 (maximum of three).....	12 Points
The four items above are the ONLY ones for which points will be awarded. No points will be awarded for age, marriage or dependents other than children under 18. A complete list of medals and campaigns for which points are to be awarded is published on page 5 of today's paper.	
"Interim" minimum score for eligibility for discharge of EM. (This score is not final. The final critical score for discharge will be based on a complete tabulation of points of all soldiers. It is expected to be the same or slightly lower.).....	85 Points
"Interim" minimum score for eligibility for discharge of enlisted Wacs.....	44 Points

1. Month in service = 1 pt
2. Month in service overseas = 1 pt
3. Combat award (including medal and battle stars) = 5 pts
4. Dependent child under 18 = 12 pts

Time of service was calculated from September 16, 1940. Famed American soldier and war correspondent Bill Mauldin drew a cartoon referencing the point system. He drew an American soldier who had just returned home from overseas. The happy dad greets his child for the first time by calling him a "wonderful little twelve-point rascal!"

After Japan surrendered the demand to bring troops home increased. Every congressman was under massive pressure from troops and their families. A protest by troops in Manilla became violent. The protests spread to Guam, Japan, France,

Germany, Austria, India, Korea, and England.

With the end of the war soldiers and sailors no longer had a positive sense of purpose. They felt their current mission was mostly useless. They were bored and homesick.

War music that was intended to keep morale up, was now taking it down for some. Bing Crosby's 1943 hit song, "*I'll be Home for Christmas*" had been a morale booster in '43 and '44. But it was heartbreaking for those with low points in 1945. The song speaks of hopes and feelings. Their hopes were crushed by the Point System.

In contrast, the guys on troop ships that were headed home had a theme for the history book. Les Brown's Sentimental Journey was perfect.

***Gonna take a sentimental journey
Gonna set my heart at ease
Gonna make a sentimental journey
To renew old memories***

By December 1, 1945, a new policy was started, which was based on a combination of ASR score and length of service. The points required were as follows:

- Officers (excluding Medical Department & WAC) = 70 pts + 4 years of military service
- Women's Army Corps officers = 37 pts
- Medical Department officers = 55 pts
- All enlisted men = 50 pts + 4 years of military service
- All enlisted women = 32 pts

All enlisted fathers with three or more children (under 18 years) were immediately

eligible for discharge irrespective of their time in military service.^[1] One soldier wrote his wife that he only had 28 points. “No chance of me getting home soon. We should have made at least three kids.”

In Europe the 82nd Airborne Division had one of the highest numbers of high point soldiers. They’d been in combat the longest. If all who were eligible to be discharged had been sent home immediately, the division would have folded. Replacements were needed throughout all branches of the military. New enlistments were offered, a European or Pacific Tour, much shorter seven-week basic training, FREE travel for families and increased pay.

From September to Christmas of 1945 1.2 million troops per month made it back to U.S. soil. They weren’t home yet. All buses, trains, planes and ox carts were packed solid with servicemen heading home. Many ended up stranded in cities on both coasts. Thousands were invited in by local families for a holiday meal and celebration.

Back in the Pacific there was never boredom on board ship. There was always paint to scrape and decks to swab. Also, the Navy had been assigned to the biggest humanitarian operation of all time. For the amphibious navy their mission was the same. Move people and equipment across bodies of water where harbors don’t exist. This capability put some amphib crews face to face with their former enemy.

The leapfrogging advance across the Pacific had left many Japanese garrisons cut off from Japan. With no resupply of food or medicine they were left to wither away. Starvation and disease were rampant. Many

of the amphibians got the unenviable task of beaching on these Japanese held islands. Small convoys were sent to these islands to accept surrender and transport the POWs to Japan. One of these was on tiny Marcus Island. It is isolated about 1200 miles southeast of Tokyo. It had a garrison of about 2,700 army, navy and civilian Japanese.



Japanese prisoners of war awaiting transport back to Japan.

Ensign Fred Lee – LSM 57: *We got orders to get underway with a load of supplies for Marcus Island which still had Japanese troops there. We were told to accept the surrender of the Japanese army and navy garrison stationed there and to disarm them. The mighty 57 with our 40mm gun was to carry this out along with some smaller amphibious craft. When we got there, we lowered our ramp and watched a Japanese officer come aboard to surrender his garrison of troops.*

The destroyer USS *Bagley* (DD-386) was also on hand at Marcus Island. On 31 August 1945 the formal surrender was signed and accepted on the deck of *Bagley*.

Ensign Fred Lee: *Going ashore with these diseased Japs is no pleasure. We were*

providing them with food but for some they were too weak to do any good. Every day from our ship we would observe funeral pyres of burning logs with deceased Japanese military personnel being cremated. It took 30 amphibians to evacuate and transport the Japanese back to Tokyo.

Ensign Fred Lee had been in the Navy since 1942. He had the second highest number of points aboard the ship. He sent in his request for release in October. An enlisted man with higher points had been first to leave LSM-57.

Fred Lee (letter home) – *When I get off the ship there will still be a long wait for transportation. I understand there are 20,000 men waiting now on Saipan. LSMs are in great demand for inter-island cargo hauling. I am watching them now load us up for another trip to Marcus. There are two or three hundred soldiers here with their barracks bags waiting to get on the LSM next to us. They look like occupation troops for Japan. They are too quiet and somber to be going home.*

Fred Lee got his orders on 6 November 1945. He instructed his parents to stop writing. "I'll make it home by Christmas. So long, Fred." He would be taking a troop ship to the west coast then report to Great Lakes. He was feeling mixed emotions to leave the ship but was elated to be going home.

December 1945 was the biggest month for Magic Carpet. A subset operation went into effect called Operation Santa Claus. Nearly 700,000 troops returned to the United States just before Christmas. This was the peak month for the operation.

Location, location, location

Some of the amphibians had the good luck of being near home when the war ended. LCI(G) 439 was one of those lucky ones. Signalman Bill Mercer had participated in five invasions while on 439. After Okinawa was declared secure, his ship was ordered back to Pearl Harbor for refitting, repair, and much needed rest for the crew. After coming out of drydock they went out on shake down and tested their new equipment. Now they were ready to share their experience and help train new LCI crews.



LCI(G) 439 in convoy with Flotilla 3 and following the stern of LCI(G) 402.

While there they received orders for the next assignment... the Japanese Island of Honshu. Mercer was included in the briefing with officers and ordered not to share the information with shipmates. The crew of 439 had been lucky so far. They lost three crew members early on at Guam. But otherwise, they were unscathed. Mercer spent the day in quiet reflection of his chances. Would their luck hold out for the biggest invasion of the war?

Then on August 6, the Enola Gay dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima. Another bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki and on August 15, the war was over. "Honolulu erupted into a roar of sound, fury, and fireworks" according to Mercer. Yet, with the war apparently over, a wartime training cruise that was scheduled took place anyhow. Their flotilla fired rockets on beaches, AA at target sleeves and tested all the new equipment. Now ready for the next war, the Flotilla 3 was sent to the beautiful island of Kauai. Liberty was granted every day. September was tense for those with high points and hoping to be home for Christmas. One younger officer got orders to go back to the Pacific Fleet for temporary duty. Others with low points worried. Mercer and a dozen others had high points. They had their seabags packed. On September 22 they got orders to pack up for immediate departure stateside.

Before leaving an officer called Mercer aside. He told him, if he stayed on the ship he would advance him to First Class Signalman. Without hesitation Mercer told him thank you, but I'm going home.

Bill Mercer SM2/c: *We boarded an LST, slept on cots on a huge main deck, and listened to the 1945 World Series with the Cubs during the six-day voyage to San Francisco. Sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge in the bay was a thrilling adventure that brought tears to our eyes. We survived the war and finally made it home to the good ole USA.*



The attack transport USS Fon du Lac APA-166 enters San Francisco Bay after passing under Golden Gate Bridge with returning troops. This was a fond memory for many men.

Not all LCI crews had location and high points to their advantage. When the war ended, LCI(L) 971 was in Leyte Gulf. Ensign John Harrington, a 90-day wonder, had been aboard since June 1944. He had participated in eight combat landings. On August 6 they got word of the big bomb at Hiroshima. Three days later a second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Then orders came to return to Pearl Harbor.



The crew of LCI(L) 971 were based in the "Oriental Paris" at Shanghai Harbor for two months after the war.

Harrington and the entire crew were ecstatic. They were going to be converted to a rocket ship. This was certainly in preparation for the invasion of Japan. But

they would be in Pearl Harbor for at least a month while conversion and training were performed. During the war, sailors lived for the moment. Harrington and two other ensigns cracked open a bottle of Scotch that had been safely stowed away for such an occasion. About the time the scotch was gone, word was passed that the Japs had surrendered. Out came the warm Blatz beer. Harrington threw up that good scotch while hanging over the port side and watching fireworks from every ship in the harbor.

The next day their hopes and dreams were dashed. They were sent to Okinawa. About the time they arrived, so did the typhoon that Japanese defenders had hoped would sink the American invasion force. It was timed perfectly for the arrival of *LCI(L)* 971. The ship was forced out to sea to ride out the storm. When 971 returned they found dozens of ships had been sunk, damaged or beached from the storm. Their new orders would take them to Shanghai, China. Rocket ships were no longer needed, but flat-bottomed infantry ships were.

Although not Pearl Harbor, Shanghai was considered Oriental Paris. They spent two enjoyable months there. They ferried Chinese Nationalist troops upriver and delivered 200 others to Formosa. While in China some crewmembers with high points got their tickets to go home. All the officers had more time in grade than Harrington and were eventually gone. The new skipper had never been to sea. He became sick and ended up in a navy hospital in Saipan.

When *LCI(L)* 971 finally got orders for San Diego, Harrington and the quartermaster were pretty much in charge. They arrived on 4 April 1946 at 0700. On

May 3rd the ship was decommissioned. The skeleton crew lowered the tattered ensign, took pictures, shook hands and went their separate ways. "It was not as joyous a day as we had all thought it would be," recalled Harrington.

During the war over a half million servicemen got married overseas. There were wives with babies that wanted to join their husbands in America. The WSA was aware that American GIs had married women in England, France, Italy, and Australia during the four years of conflict. They authorized 29 troop ships to deliver war brides to their new homes in North America.



These Australian war brides were brought to America in 1946. The War Bride Act was passed by Congress allowing a half million servicemen to reunite with their overseas families.

The last ships bringing servicemen home during Operation Magic Carpet arrived in September 1946. It had taken four years to deploy eight million servicemen overseas. It only took 14 months to bring them all home. The enormous success of Operation Magic Carpet was due to excellent logistics, planning, and execution.



The USS Saratoga made one of the last Magic Carpet runs in 1946. The flight deck is covered with troops waiting to come ashore. Saratoga held the record of 29,204 troops...the most carried home by any ship during the operation.



This special souvenir booklet was prepared by Yank's Magazine. It was distributed to the troops in China, Burma, and India theater.

Operation Santa Claus was launched as a subset of Magic Carpet. Its goal was to speed up getting veterans discharged and home for Christmas. Planes, trains, ships and autos created the worst traffic jam in history. Many civilians volunteered to help transport troops home. Some didn't make it

home by Christmas. But they were invited into homes for holiday dinners everywhere. One veteran remarked that just setting foot on American soil was the best Christmas gift he'd ever had.

Christmas 1945 was a watershed moment for millions of Americans. After years of sacrifice, loss, and fear, their hopes were finally realized.

Rationing for gas, sugar and tires were still in effect. Yet Christmas 1945 was deeply emotional. There were joyful homecomings, relief the war was over, and for some "grief" for those not returning ever. This was the most meaningful and significant Christmas in American History.



(Above) Lighter times for Crewmembers of LCI(L) 996 (L to R) Myron Hennemuth BM2/c, Unidentified, Robert Wright EM1/c Somewhere in the Pacific between Japan and Hawaii

For many of the crewmembers of an LCI in the Pacific the Magic Carpet ride would not begin until after Christmas 1945 Following the surrender of Japan the LCI's were deployed to move thousands of troops scattered around the Pacific Islands to bases where they could be transferred to the larger transports. After completing this duty, they then had to sail their ships halfway around the world. Most did not reach the United States until well into 1946.

U.S. Navy Had a Small Craft Beginning

By Jeff Veenmeyer

The Battle of Fairhaven was first naval engagement of the American Revolution. A single masted 40-ton whaling sloop with two swivel guns and 30-armed militia made up the naval force.

Several weeks after the battles of Lexington and Concord the British warship HMS *Falcon* was patrolling waters off Dartmouth, Massachusetts. On 13 May 1775, *Falcon* captured two patriot vessels in

Massachusetts Bay. The ships were owned by merchants from Sandwich, Massachusetts. The angered owners gathered 30 militia and launched a raid with the whaler *Success*.



A single mast sloop.

The group was led by Captain Daniel Egery. The small ship had space below deck to hide the militia. During the night of 14 May *Success* was rowed out through the fog. Both captured merchant ships were anchored in Buzard Bay a couple miles apart. The British had left them manned with small crews of midshipman. The first ship was snuck up on, boarded, and captured without firing a shot. Sails were hoisted. Both *Success* and the recaptured merchant attacked the other ship. The British fired their swivel guns. The patriots replied with their swivel guns and heavy small arms fire.

The British suffered casualties, they were boarded by the militia, and the ship was surrendered.

Both merchant ships were recaptured along with 13 British prisoners. This engagement became known as the Battle of Fairhaven. A plaque commemorating the event is mounted at Fort Pheonix in Fairhaven.

Five months later, October 13, 1775, the Continental Navy was born. The Navy would be facing off against the might of the British Navy. A fleet of 250 warships with seasoned crews were sent to take on the patriot whaling fleet. There were 65 warships commissioned during the Revolution. Only 11 survived the war.



This plaque was placed in Fort Phoenix by the Sons of the American Revolution in 1927.

The Continental Navy was disbanded after the war. But with the urging of President George Washington the U.S. Navy was created. Congress authorized six frigates in 1795. In 1797 they built and commissioned *United States* (44 guns), *Constellation* (36 guns), and *Constitution* (44 guns). Construction on the other three was postponed. The USS *Constitution* is oldest commissioned Navy warship still in service. It is homeported today in Boston.



USS Constitution is all decked out in Boston Harbor and firing a salute. It was nicknamed Old Ironsides for the way cannon balls would bounce off the wooden hull.

On November 15, 1781, President George Washington said, “It follows then as certain as the night succeeds the day, that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious.”

During the Revolutionary War 3,500 sailors served in the Continental Navy. During World War II about 4.1 million sailors were in the fight. We had far surpassed Great Britain in control of the seas. The U.S. Navy is the largest most effective naval force in the world.

Over the last 250 years the Navy has been Defending our Freedom and Protecting Prosperity. During that time the Navy has given America much more.

Radar systems developed for wartime use were first installed on the USS New York in 1938.

Sonar developed to detect enemy submarines is now a vital tool for mapping ocean floors.

Global Positioning System developed in the 1960s to track enemy submarines, is now the GPS in our cars, smartphones and emergency services.

Duct Tape was a cloth tape used by a sailor’s mom. She suggested using it on Navy ships due to its ability to stick even when wet. The Navy tested the idea and contracted Johnson & Johnson to put it in production during World War II. It was used for sealing ammo boxes.

Microwave Ovens was invented by a Navy radio operator who used his military math and science knowledge to invent the microwave. The Navy awarded Perry Spencer the Distinguished Service Medal.

Popeye, the sailor, debuted in 1929. He appeared in patriotic films and posters during WWII. His image is engraved on a Pentagon licensed challenge coin.

Tattoos are everywhere thanks to Polynesian culture. About 25% of British and American sailors were sporting tattoos by the late 18th century. A sailor’s tattoo is now listed as a distinguishing mark on his personnel record.





This Lone Sailor statue looks out over Chesapeake Bay in Norfolk, Virginia.

More than 41 million have worn the U.S. Navy uniform since 1775. The Cracker Jack dress blue enlisted uniform is iconic with the “dixie cup” white hat, square knotted tie, back flap jumper, 13 button bell bottom trousers and pea coat. The Navy has tried to modernize the look over the years but has met with such backlash that most parts have always come back...especially the white hat. Even women wear it now.

The uniform is so iconic that it has been immortalized in the Lone Sailor statues that stand in 19 locations around the world. The statue is looking out to sea with the collar of his pea coat turned up against cold winds. Peacoats were known to stay warm even when wet. The design was borrowed

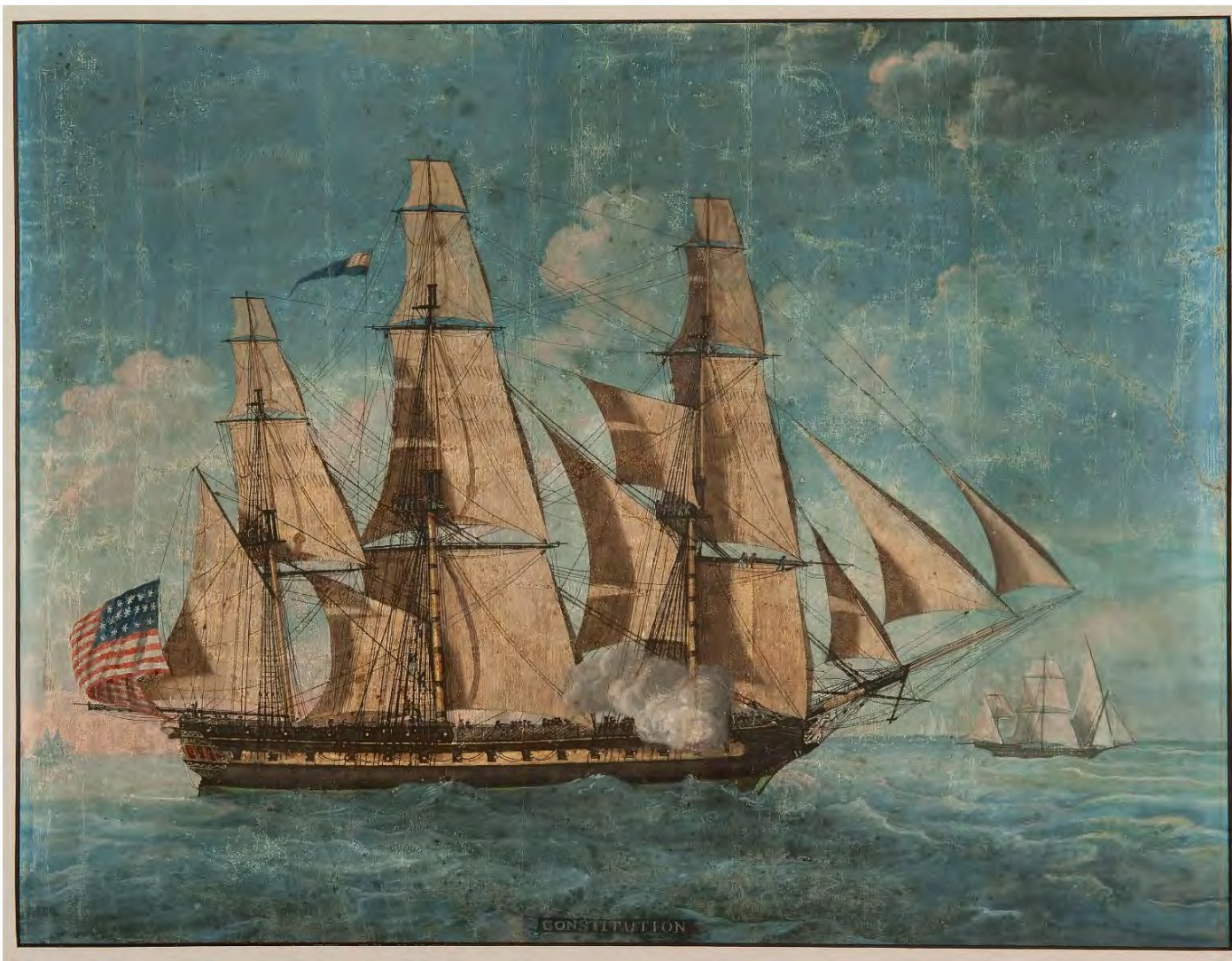
from the Dutch and has been standard issue for over 100 years.

“Anchors Aweigh” fight song is credited to a pair of midshipmen class of 1907 at the U.S. Naval Academy. It was first performed at the 1906 Army-Navy Football game. Navy won 10-0. The song has been revised several times. It has three verses. The most known verse that we all recognize is Verse 3 that begins “Anchor away my boys.” Who knew?

The seal of the Department of the Navy was approved by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on October 23, 1957, by Executive Order. It features a tri-mast ship underway in moderate sea, below fair sky, the U.S. flag atop the main sale, and commodore’s flag atop the mizzen.

In 1972, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt authorized official recognition of 13 October as the birthday of the U.S. Navy. Since then, each CNO has encouraged a Navy-wide celebration of this occasion “to enhance a greater appreciation of our Navy heritage, and to provide a positive influence toward pride and professionalism in the naval service.”

In his second message to Congress President Theodore Roosevelt said, “A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It the surest guarantee of peace.”



This watercolor and gouache painting, attributed to Michele Felice Corné and completed about 1803, is the earliest known depiction of USS *Constitution*. The image reflects the ship's appearance after having already undergone several refits since its launch in 1797 and shows much of the complement of sails set and the original Hercules figurehead on the bow. The figurehead was destroyed in 1804 when the USS *Constitution* and USS *President* collided while on patrol in the Mediterranean during the First Barbary War. (USS Constitution Museum).

(Right), The seal of the Department of the Navy was approved in 1957.



LCI in Print During World War II



The beginning of every battle in World War II started in the factories, shipyards, mines, and farms back in the United States. Every item used by the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard had to be produced and shipped to train and equip our fighting forces overseas and at home. The Government Printing Office produced hundreds of different posters that were placed in those factories and shipyards. The posters encouraged their

workers to maintain the highly demanding levels of production needed by America to fight the war on two fronts and keep our allies supplied as well. The message was always a single line, like here. They almost universally included an image of a fighting man to whom the employees might relate to. That man in the graphic might be one of their family members.

Unknown LCI's in Action

Invasion of Okinawa

April 1, 1945.

(Top right) From the air
Amphibious tractors are forming
up with the LCI(G)s that will
lead them to their landing
beaches.

(Below) View from the
AMTRACS as they approach
the beach with the LCI(G)s
leading the way.



In Memoriam

LCI 412

Harold McCreary



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

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

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The museum ship USS *Cobia* (SS-245) went into dry dock in 2025. Wisconsin Maritime Museum employees and volunteers visited the submarine during the six-week hull maintenance at Fincantieri's Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. *Cobia* is a National Historic Site at the museum in Manitowoc. Twenty-six submarines were built at Manitowoc Shipbuilding during WWII. *Cobia* sank 13 Japanese vessels on six patrols. The 1.5-million-dollar restoration project will keep *Cobia* open to public tours for years to come. Hull maintenance is essential to preserving museum ships like *Cobia* and LCI(L) 713.