

FEBRUARY 2015



Elsie Item

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
USS LANDING CRAFT, INFANTRY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
• Established May 14-18, 1991, Norfolk, VA •

IWO JIMA

70TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



ON OUR COVER:

A gun crew aboard a LCI stares up at Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. It is believed that the LCI in the photo is the LCI(R) 708.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

A Tribute to Hal Bleyhl

A Letter From William Caldwell

Robert Newberry's WWII Experiences

"The LCI Gunboats of Iwo Jima"



CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES:

www.usslci.com Our own website

www.amphibiousforces.org For information on the LCI 713

Now on **Facebook!** Please join our group:

"Remembering the LCI Vets"

"THE ELSIE ITEM"

NUMBER 89, February 2015

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, or to anyone just interested in the history of LCIs. Published quarterly by the USS LCI National Association. Zach S. Morris, Editor (*John P. Cummer, Editor Emeritus*). Any material for possible publication should be sent to the Editor, preferably by email (morrisza23@gmail.com).

A WORD FROM THE OLD MAN

In the words of James Brown, "I feel good!"

Why? Well, sometimes I'll catch myself thinking about something I think I should be doing for Association business and then remember that the baton has been passed; that someone else is at the helm. Sharp younger men and women who love this Association just as much as I do are in there thinking, planning, leading. The good, steady input from Ken and his staff at Nehemiah Communications is still there. Zach Morris continues to do his great work in editing the newsletter. Planning for our next reunion is proceeding. Our friends in the LST Association, liking what they saw in us, are coming alongside.

I remember all this and relax and just enjoy my new role as a proud cheerleader watching MY team in action. All of which makes me very sanguine about the future. There may be fewer of us "old timers" around but sons, daughters, grandkids and just friends are carrying on and will be here for some time to remind this highly technical new world of what it was like to put to sea in a flat-bottomed craft powered by bus engines and manned by adolescents, most of whom had never been to sea before.

Plenty of reason to feel good!

But that's not all. Those dedicated hard workers in the Amphibious Forces Museum continue their skilled work in bringing the 713 back to her WWII condition and appearance. Those of us who had the privilege of treading her steel decks again while at our last reunion came away with an increased sense of the tangible reality of the days of our youth. And there is more and more promise that the day of her complete re-construction - new bottom, engines and all - will really come.

Yes, plenty of reason to "feel good"! I hope all of you out there can share in this promising future.

Another shipmate passes

Along with these good feelings comes sadness as we see our shipmates slip away. When one of them is a well-known leader who has served long and faithfully, the sadness of loss is intensified. We feel that way now about Hal Bleyhl who finally slipped his lines and set sail for his final home port just last November 2nd. Hal was with us at our Portland reunion, participating in our business meeting and vowing to keep fighting his illness. His courageous fight ended sooner than we expected and we truly miss him. His courageous spirit and zest for life were well caught in a quote chosen for the program at his funeral:

"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body. But rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, body totally worn out and screaming, WOO-HOO WHAT A RIDE!"

...and one from Hal himself:

"If I'd known I was going to live this long...I would have kept my boat."

So long for now, good friend. We will miss you.

John Cummer



So Long Hal, We're Really Going to Miss You...

(Photos courtesy of Hal's Facebook page)

Our beloved lifelong member and recently retired treasurer of the USS LCI Association, **Hal Bleyhl** of the LCI 812, passed away the week before our last issue made it to your mailboxes. Fair winds and following seas to Hal Bleyhl—a dedicated, proud, and outstanding man, who loved his family and did so much for our LCI Association. We will always owe Hal a debt for all he has done to keep the LCI Association alive. He was a fighter until the very end.

"He was one of the finest people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. He was with our group almost from the very beginning and was a great asset. His contribution to his friends and his country was number one. I will miss him greatly."

—*Jim Talbert, LCI 618*

"Hal was blessed with a large family who adored him. I too loved the man. I will miss his integrity, intelligence, counsel, common sense, his distinct voice and his devotion to family and fellow LCIs. Smooth sailing Hal!"

—*John France, LCI Association*

European War Historian

"Hal was an amazing man who I loved. I recall him offering for me to stay with him in his room at the Portland Reunion a few years ago. He was such a kind person and someone who I often sought advice from in daily life. I will miss him."

—*Dennis Blocker, LCI Association Pacific War Historian*



IN MEMORIAM

*“Almighty and eternal God, from whose love we cannot be parted, either by death or life;
hear our prayers and thanksgiving for those whom we here remember.
Grant unto sorrowing family and shipmates the blessing of your peace that passes understanding.”*

LCI 67
Jack Vernon Higgins

LCI 373
Albert D. DiVincenzo

LCI 437
Andrew M. Rauen

LCI 449
Leo Bedell (Silver Star)

LCI 471
Lawrence Hermes

LCI 472
Barnett J. Axelrod

LCI 472
Robert E. Coburn



LCI 487
Vernon Haslup

LCI 492
Thomas B. Mayes

LCI 712
Henry J. Alberico

LCI 812
Hal Bleyhl

LCI 814
Robert Short

LCI 1032
Harold Petke

LCI 1077
Ross Fragale

**William Caldwell,
LCI 5 and LCI 218
329 Jamie Way
Greenville, TX 75402**

November 26, 2014:

In 1935 two friends lived in the small Hunt County town of Celeste, TX. A few years later, one would join the Army and the other one joined the Navy. Early in 1943, both ended up in North Africa. Later on the Navy man was transferred to a Landing Craft at Bizerte, Tunisia. Soon both were involved in the invasions at Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio, Italy.

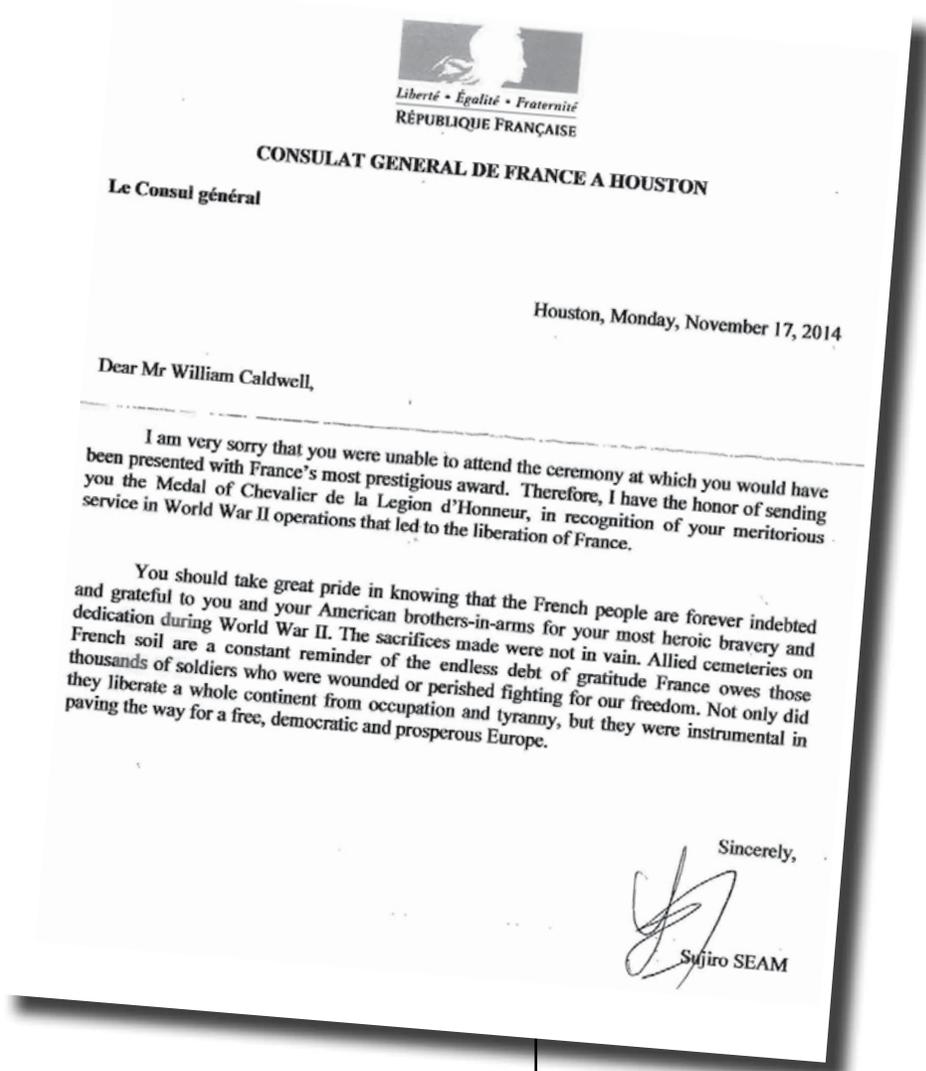
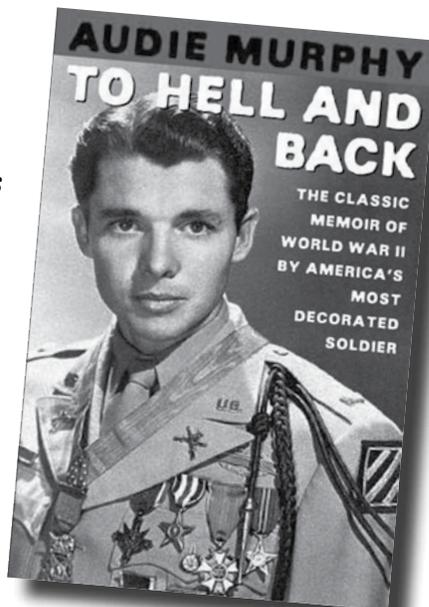
While the soldier continued on into Southern France, the sailor was making the Normandy invasion. As the war was coming to the end, the soldier had become the most decorated service man. He was awarded the Medal of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, among many others.

The soldier was Audie Leon Murphy. The sailor was William Caldwell.

After 1937, I never saw Audie again. Audie got his medals the hard way. I got mine 70 years later just doing my job like many others. I want to share this honor with all the LCI Association.

—William Caldwell

The cover of Audie Murphy's "To Hell and Back." Murphy was the most decorated soldier in World War II, including being awarded the Medal of Honor. Though he won many medals during the war in Europe, he lost nearly all his buddies fighting alongside him.



A letter to Mr. Caldwell from the French Consulate awarding him the Medal of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), France's highest decoration.

My WWII Experiences



Robert Benton Newberry

BRANCH OF SERVICE
U.S. Navy

HOMETOWN
Dallas, TX



ACTIVITY DURING WWII

SERVED WITH THE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES IN THE INVASIONS OF IWO JIMA AND OKINAWA. AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART FOR WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION AT IWO JIMA, ON FEBRUARY 23, 1945.

Courtesy Jennifer Dekker, Robert's granddaughter. <http://www.wwiimemorial.com/registry/search/plaq.asp?honoreeID=380967&print=>

MY NAME IS ROBERT NEWBERRY. In 1944 at the age of 18, just 3 months out of high school, I was drafted into the military during WWII. The war in Europe was coming to a close and the US was trying to win the war with Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. After a physical exam, I was offered any of three branches of the military. I first went to the Army booth and they told me how great they were. Then I went to the Marine booth and they told me, "Once a Marine, always a Marine." Finally, I went to the Navy booth. They told me that the Army and Marines were great, but that in the Navy, they always had their food and beds with them. I said, I'll take it. I didn't realize at the time that I would go in with the troops landing on the beaches. Our gun boats were called Landing Craft Infantry. These boats were 158 feet long and made for landing at Normandy, France. After Normandy, they took off the landing ramps and installed rockets and mortars. Then they transported these landing craft to the Pacific war with Japan. On February 19, 1945, they sent our flotilla of LCIs to the invasion of Iwo Jima, Japan. This was an island 6 and one half miles

long and 3 miles wide—600 miles from the main island of Japan. The island was created by a volcano named Mt. Suribachi and was made of black lava. The United States needed this island because of its two landing strips for B-29 aircraft returning from missions over Japan. A total of over 6,800 Americans were killed and 19,000 wounded during the battle of Iwo Jima. The Japanese soldiers were ordered to take a minimum of 10 American lives each and to commit suicide if captured. Twenty-two thousand Japanese were killed and less than 900 surrendered. On February 23, 1945 at dusk a kamikaze airplane slipped in under the radar diving for a battleship in the harbor. All of our LCI gunboats, along with many other ships in the harbor, were firing at the suicide bomber. As he was making his suicide dive on the ship, he was firing 50 caliber machine guns. A row of his bullets hit my boat throwing shrapnel in our gun tubs while we were firing at him.

I was awarded the Purple Heart for the wounds received in action. After 30 days securing Iwo Jima, we were sent to the Philippines to practice for an Easter Sunday invasion of the island of

Okinawa. We went in with General Buckner's Army. The landing was a success. We had over 375 kamikaze air raids while there. Okinawa, being just a few hundred miles from Formosa (now called Taiwan), was Japan's kamikaze base. They would attack in mass against our fleet of ships.

Many of our ships were hit by the suicide bombers. We had so many raids during the daytime that we were not allowed to leave our guns. The cooks would bring us sack lunches. General Buckner, the head of the Army there, was killed by a sniper, near the end of the battle of Okinawa. After Okinawa, they sent our flotilla of LCIs to Pearl Harbor to add steam radiators for heat. We did not need heat in the Pacific. We were being sent to the Aleutian Islands to invade the northern tip of Japan. They took us to a conference room with maps on the wall to show us where we were to land. They estimated that we would lose over 250,000 men on the landing alone. By President Truman ordering the two atomic bombs to be dropped on Japan, World War II ended and the quarter million American soldiers were spared. How lucky we were thanks to Mr. Truman. After V-J Day was declared, while still in Pearl Harbor, they sent our flotilla of LCIs to Shanghai, China to support their military. On our way, we stopped at Okinawa. Our LCIs were ordered to leave port and go out to sea because of an impending typhoon. The storm had swells up to 60 feet high. We were ordered

to go below and strap ourselves in our bunks to ride out the storm. It was the most horrible feeling a person could have. Most everyone was throwing up and the torment lasted for three hours. In this ordeal, two seams were cracked on the hull of the boat, requiring us to use our handy billys to halt the leaks of water into the boat. Our LCIs had all weld joints and no rivets like the big ships. Thanks to the handy billy pumps we did not sink. From Okinawa we went on to Shanghai, China. After arrival, I had enough points with my Purple Heart and two battle stars to be discharged. After arriving back in the United States, I went to a distribution center for discharge. I was offered another stripe if I would sign up for four more years. I declined. If I had signed up, being in the amphibious Navy, I would have been in the Inchon Korea landing on the beaches.

In closing, even though I was drafted, it was an honor to have served my country in this capacity.

Robert Newberry,
LCI 630



2015 LCI & LST Joint Reunion Update!

Return to Charleston, SC in September/October 2015!

Members of the LCI and LST Association Board of Directors are currently finalizing the dates amongst each other, as well as having discussions with hotels in Charleston, SC for the upcoming 2015 joint reunion. No specific dates have been decided, but sometime in September/October is the target. We look forward to seeing all veterans, associate members, family, and friends this fall!

Veterans and their families from ALL other Amphibious Force Associations are also welcome to join us!

ANY AND ALL CHARLESTON 2015 REUNION INFO WILL BE PUBLISHED IN COMING "ELSIE ITEM" ISSUES! STAY TUNED!

NEPTUNE:

The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings

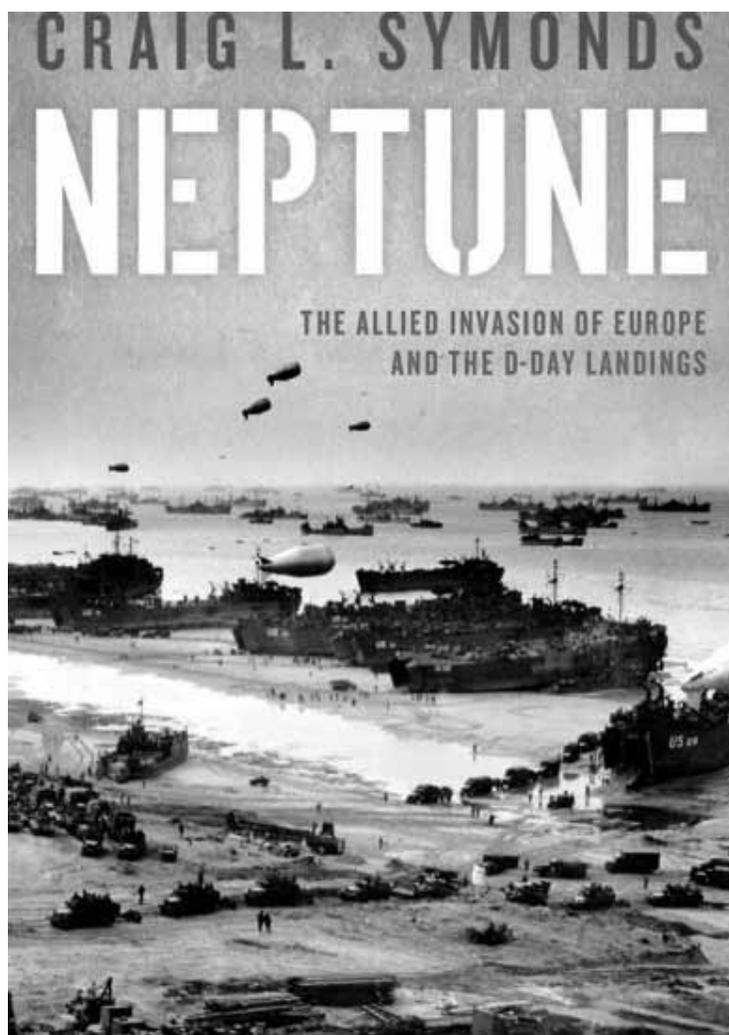
LCI Association Chairman of the Board, John Cummer, recently brought to our attention the release of Dr. Craig Symonds' book, "Neptune: The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings." The book released on May 8, 2014. According to our Association's Pacific Historian, Dennis Blocker, "This book was heavily researched using the LCI Archives that we donated to the National Museum of the Pacific War." Dennis was referring to the LCI Association's collection of records he and other LCI Association members donated to the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas back in March 2013.

Mrs. Marty Kaderli from the Admiral Nimitz Foundation also took the time to reach out to us to let us know that Dr. Craig L. Symonds recently gave his remarks and signed books previewing his newest publication in the ballroom of the Nimitz Hotel, in Fredericksburg, TX on August 15, 2014. She made sure to add, "Of course, you know that the research for this book is from the LCI National Association's archives!"

A quote from a review of the book from Douglas Brinkley:

"Craig L. Symonds, one of America's greatest military historians, scores a triumph with Neptune. In this masterpiece of historical scholarship Symonds sheds new light on how FDR mobilized the U.S. Navy for the D-Day landings of June 6, 1944. His archival work is dazzling. Highly recommended!"

—Douglas Brinkley, professor of history at Rice University, CBS News Historian, and author of "The Boys of Point du Hoc"



The cover of "Neptune: The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings," by Craig Symonds.

"This superb volume is the first comprehensive account in a half century of the vital naval operations that lifted the liberating legions to France, landed them on D-Day, and supported them. Craig Symonds ranges with easy command from often-fractious strategic planning sessions to the searing experiences of young sailors in the crucible of fire-drenched beaches. Neptune is at once an important scholarly contribution and a great read."

—Richard B. Frank, author of "Guadalcanal and Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire"

Earl William "Bill" Kersten Jr.

**February 13, 1923 –
September 5, 2013**

EARL WILLIAM "BILL" KERSTEN JR. died in Sparks, Nevada on September 5, 2013. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri on February 13, 1923. Bill was preceded in death by his wife, Betty; parents, Earl and Ione; brother, Robert; sister, Patricia Campbell and daughter, Laura Kersten King.

He was greatly loved by his son, William (Phyllis Beverly), daughter, Ann Ebner (Greg), granddaughters, Rosemary and Charlotte Ebner, all of Sparks; his son-in-law, Guy King of Chico, California and his granddaughter, Mary King of Seattle, Washington. He had several nieces and nephews who were especially fond of him including Carl Campbell, Meg Owen and Patty Kersten.

Bill grew up in St. Louis. As a kid he loved baseball and was a card carrying member of the St. Louis Cardinals Knothole Gang, youngsters who peered through holes in fences to watch their favorite team play. He also enjoyed reading, nature studies, and called St. Louis' Forest Park his first playground.

Bill joined the U.S. Navy in 1943. He served on a Landing Craft Infantry ship and participated in the invasions of the Philippines and Okinawa. He later said that his service in the Pacific Islands first sparked his interest in geography.

Right before he shipped out for the Navy, Bill had a date with Betty Campbell. They corresponded throughout his service and married on March 27, 1948. They had three children and enjoyed 49 years of marriage before her death in 1997.

Bill completed his Bachelor's Degree with honors from Washington University, and received his Master's and PhD in Geography from University of Nebraska. In 1951, Bill accepted a position in the geography



department at University of Nevada Reno. He taught in the Mackay School of Mines and studied the physical and economic geography of Nevada. He was very modest about his accomplishments but several of his articles were published in the prestigious journal, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Under his leadership, the geography department expanded and flourished. Bill retired in 1987.

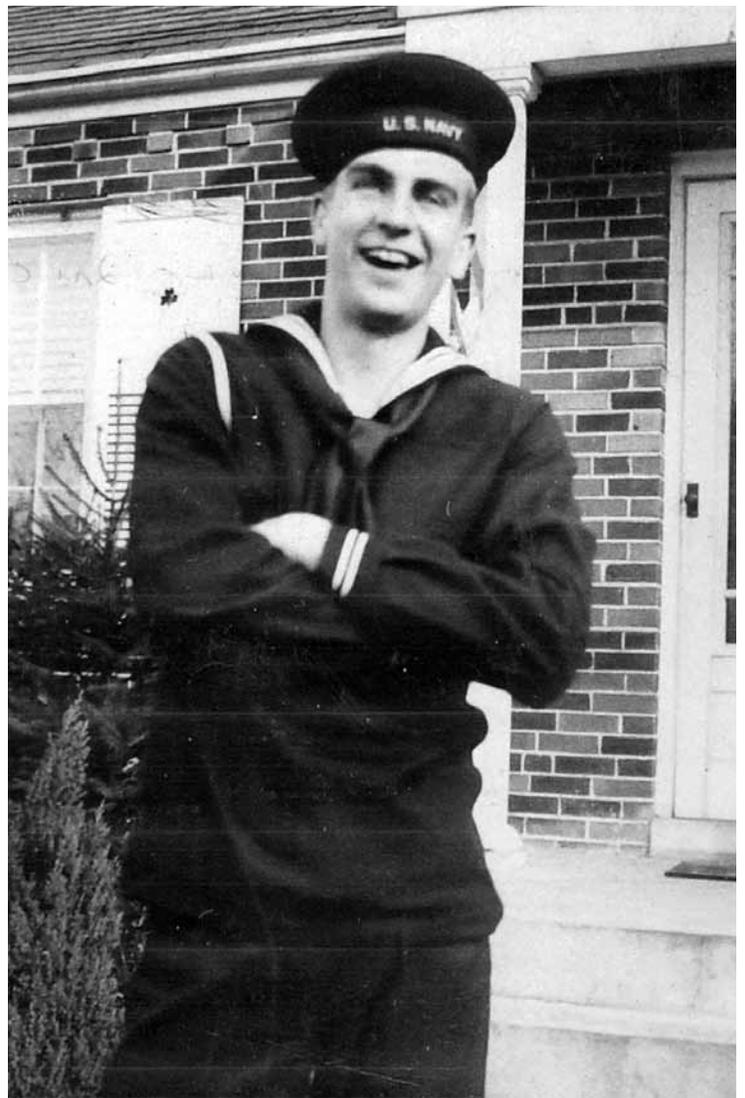
Bill enjoyed traveling, reading (especially scholarly history and eccentric mysteries), watching movies (of which he had a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of obscure character actors) gardening, bird watching and writing on his favorite subject, geography. Only a few months before his death he was working on a book-length geographical study of Nevada. An avid sports fan, he rarely missed a Giants, 49ers or Wolfpack game and could often be seen shivering in the stands on an icy game day cheering on The Pack. Bill was known for his unending optimism and sometimes raucous sense of

humor. Less known was Bill's generosity to many individuals and causes whether friends, family or charitable organizations. He loved and supported his granddaughters and rarely missed a soccer game, concert, recital or graduation. His presence made almost any event a party. He was quick to crack a joke, share a favorite movie or whip up a batch of his famous chiles rellenos. We are grateful to have had such a wonderful Dad, Father-in-law and Grandpa. He will be missed.

(Originally published in Reno Gazette-Journal on Sept. 22, 2013)

A very special thanks to Bill's daughter, Ann Ebner, for donating \$100 to the LCI Association

***Earl Kersten Jr. (1943)
from St. Louis. He
became a Quartermaster,
2d Class on LCI 987.
(Courtesy Ann Ebner)***



***(Back: L to R)
Teague, TN; Petter,
MI; Kersten, MO;
Carney, WV; Adkins,
IL; Feltman, IL.
(Kneeling in front:
L to R) Hawley,
NC and LePage,
CT (Courtesy Ann
Ebner)***

THE LCI GUNBOATS OF IWO JIMA D-2: FEBRUARY 17, 1945

By Zach S. Morris



An LCI (G) heads directly for the beach. The shoulder of Mount Suribachi is on the left. The ship is just out of range and the forward gun crew stands loosely in position ready for action. Iwo Jima Recon (Camp, p. 76).

Photos and information taken from the books:

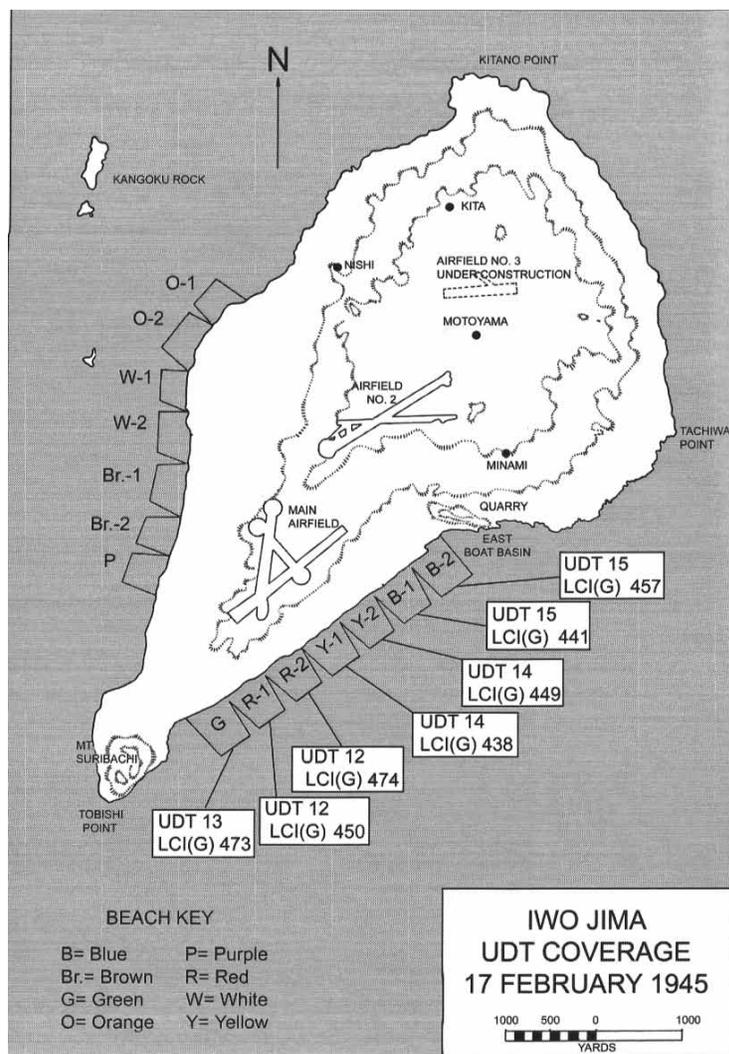
Robin L. Rielly, *American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II: A History of the LCI and LCS(L) Ships in the Pacific* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2013), pp. 208–235

Dick Camp, *Iwo Jima Recon: The U.S. Navy at War, February 17, 1945* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2007)

YEARS LATER, IT WOULD BE KNOWN AS "BLOODY IWO." For the sailors of LCI Group 8, Flotilla 3, that nickname would be all too vividly personal. February 17, 1945 could arguably be considered the single worst day in the history of the Amphibious Forces. American LCI gunboats were tasked with covering the Underwater Demolition Teams for the Navy "frogmen" swimmers clearing mines just off the landing beaches. Those divers would be among the first Navy SEALs.

Starting in the summer of 1944 when the Allies secured the Northern Mariana Islands, Iwo Jima had become increasingly problematic in the Pacific. The islands of Saipan and Tinian were used as bases from which Americans would launch raids against the Japanese mainland using their new flying dreadnaught weapon – the B-29 Superfortress. It was a weapon whose fury would strike terror in the hearts of its enemies. However, American aircraft had to pass by Iwo Jima as they approached Japan, and again on the return trip. Iwo Jima not only alerted the home islands of the coming raids, but was also a great position for Japanese fighter aircraft to cut off the raids and attack the American B-29s. It was crucial that the Americans eliminate the threat of the island as a functioning enemy base. They needed the emergency landing strip as their own. In late 1944, the planning for Iwo's capture began. Several months later, the massive invasion fleet departed Ulithi Atoll en route to "Island X" in the Volcano Islands.

670 miles south of Tokyo, the putrid smell of sulfur was overpowering 75 feet beneath the surface of the 7.5 square mile island of Iwo Jima—"Island X" as the Americans code-named it. There, in his labyrinth war room, the Japanese commander, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, was well aware of the importance of the pork chop shaped island he and his 21,000 men held. He carefully read the latest intelligence report. His eyes focused on the important sentence: "170 American ships moving northwest from Saipan."* He knew he faced an overwhelming American military force, which made the island impossible to truly defend. Nevertheless, his 109th Division would attempt to slow the American advance by bleeding them as much as they could using their



Gunboats covering the UDT operations on 17 February 1945 came under heavy shore fire with the result that all seven of the original gunboats were put out of action, along with five of their relief gunboats. One of them, LCI(G) 474, was sunk. American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II (Reilly, p. 210)

newly constructed fortress, an 11-mile maze of underground tunnels and inter-connected bunkers—one of the strongest fortified positions in the history of warfare. Heavy guns, artillery, and mortars covered the entire island above-ground in strategically placed and concealed positions, including the highest point, Mount Suribachi. The Japanese most assuredly realized that once Iwo Jima was captured, the attacks on their homeland would only increase and intensify.

It was actually 450 American ships, carrying the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions that steamed toward Iwo. The Marines were chosen to lead the invasion under the command of

Lieutenant General Holland M. "Howlin Mad" Smith on February 19, 1945. The main invasion was to take place two days after the UDT Operations—planned for February 17. The naval attack on Iwo Jima was assigned to Task Expeditionary Force 51 under Vice Admiral Richard Kelly Turner, including the LCI gunboats, part of Amphibious Support Force under Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy.

The LCI (G)s of Amphibious Support Force on Feb. 17 (D minus 2) were split into two Task Units:

Task Unit 52.5.1

Commander LCI Flotilla Three: Commander Michael J Melanaphy

- LCI (G) 627 (Flagship) – Command and control
- LCI (G) 450 – Covering Beach Red 1
- LCI (G) 474 – Covering Beach Red 2
- LCI (G) 466 – (Relief Red 1, behind 450)
- LCI (G) 469 – (Relief Yellow/Blue, behind 449)
- LCI (G) 471 – (Relief Yellow 1, behind 438)
- LCI (G) 473 – Beach Green

Task Unit 52.5.2

Commander LCI Group 8:

Lieutenant Commander W.V. Nash

- LCI (G) 438 – Beach Yellow 1
- LCI (G) 449 – Beach Yellow 2
- LCI (G) 441 – Beach Blue 1
- LCI (G) 457 – Beach Blue 2
- LCI (G) 346 – Reserve
- LCI (G) 348 – Reserve



LCI (G) 627, Commander Michael J. Malanaphy's flagship of Flotilla Three, headed for her D-2 position. Note the vivid jungle camouflage. 80 G K 3527. Iwo Jima Recon (Camp, p. 80)

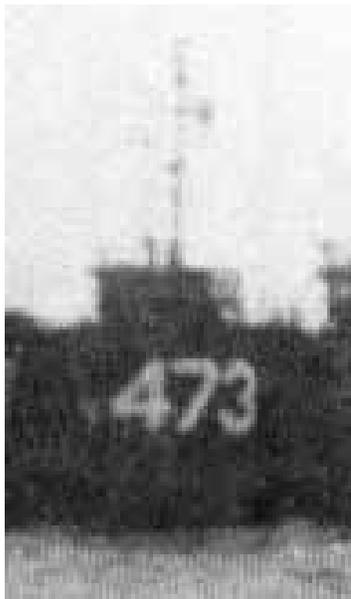
At 10:50 AM on February 17, 1945 the LCI (G)s of Group Eight opened fire bombarding the beach,



(Official US Navy Photograph) Commander Michael J Melanaphy shown here post-war as Rear Admiral, was the commanding officer of LCI(G) Flotilla Three which covered the UDT at Iwo Jima. The ships under his command all were awarded Presidential Unit Citations. Melanaphy and the commanding officers of the gunboats under him were awarded the Navy Cross. He went on to serve with distinction at Guam and Okinawa. American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II (Reilly, p. 211)

covering Captain B. Hall Hanlon's Underwater Demolition Groups, as the underwater warriors worked to clear enemy mines from the landing areas. The Japanese, waiting with alacrity underground, responded with a powerful bombardment of their own on the approaching gunboats within minutes. The Japanese had mistaken the LCI gunboats for the invading troop carriers they had long anticipated, so they concentrated all of their fire on the unlucky LCIs. The result was devastating. Every single LCI Gunboat was hit, and all but one was taken out of action that day.

LCI(G) 473



LCI (G) 473
(navsource.org)

"The LCI(G) 473, although already hit and damaged by four 5" or 6" shells, continued in toward the beach in order to get close enough to have its rockets fall on the assigned beach area. Although steered by hand from the steering gear room, and with the ship on fire forward in the vicinity of the loaded rockets, the ship was expertly and courageously maneuvered through a heavy barrage of fire in such

a manner as to save the ship and reduce the personnel casualties."

– M. J. Malanaphy (NARA, Official Action Report on Invasion of Iwo Jima: LCI-G Flotilla Three)

LCI(G) 438



LCI (G) 438 and 474 on the way into the beach at Iwo Jima on February 17, 1945.
(navsource.org)

"LCI (G) 438's fight with the Japanese lasted five minutes from the time of the initial hit until she was forced to withdraw. In that time, seven crewmen were wounded and the ship was severely damaged."

– Dick Camp (*Iwo Jima Recon*, p. 91)

LCI(G) 450



LCI (G) 450 at Saipan in 1945 (navsource.org)

"The LCI crews stood motionless at their battle stations. A gunner from one of the LCIs spoke about it. 'If we looked so still it was because we were so scared to death. But then everyone had told us there was nothing to be scared of. They told us the Japs never bothered to fire at LCIs.'"

– Dick Camp (*Iwo Jima Recon*, p. 72)

LCI(G) 474



LCI (G) 474 sinking off Iwo Jima, 17 February 1945, after receiving several hits from Japanese shore batteries while supporting UDT swimmers on a pre-invasion mission.
(navsource.org)

"Within eight minutes, 10:55 to 11:03, the ship took ten heavy-caliber hits and many smaller ones, causing four fires and knocking out all seven guns."

–Lt. (j.g.) Matthew J. Rechl, LCI (G) 474

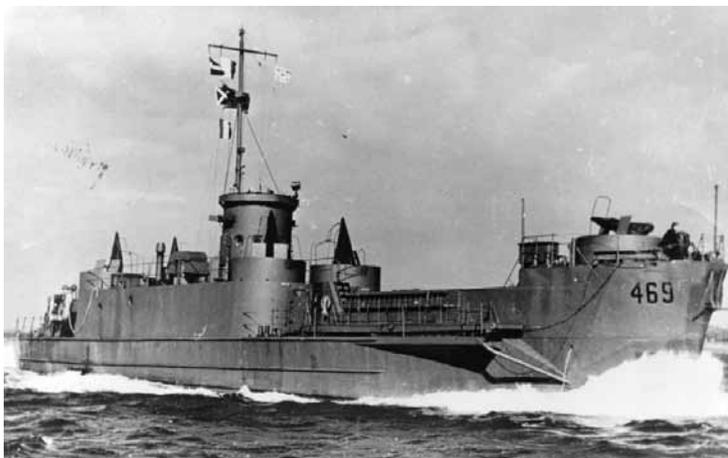
LCI(G) 466



LCI (G) 466 off the Iwo Jima invasion beaches, circa February 17–19, 1945. (navsource.org)

"[LCI(G) 466] was asking permission to come alongside [Tennessee]. When she reached us the sun was beating on the shambles of her decks. There was blood on the main deck, making widening pools as she rolled in the sluggish sea. A dead man on a gun platform was covered by a blanket. The decks were littered with wounded."
–John Marquand (*Iwo Jima Recon; Camp*, p. 90)

LCI(G) 469



LCI 469 underway. (navsource.org)

"At 11:28 we received two hits in number four compartment, starboard side and we started to take on water. I sent a message to Captain Hanlon, 'We have received several hits and are taking on water in number four hold.' He



The crew of the LCI 469. (navsource.org)

responded with 'Proceed out to capital ship in line.' The crew patched the holes so that we were no longer taking on water. I requested to 'return to the firing line.' Almost immediately, we took three more hits, which started a fire in the pilothouse."

– Lieutenant (j.g.) G. M. Connors, LCI 469 (*Iwo Jima Recon; Camp*, p. 80)

LCI(G) 471



LCI (G) 471. When the LCI (G) 471 buried their dead, Ensign Lawrence M. Hermes acted as chaplain. (Navsource.org)

"At 11:25, [LCI(G) 471] headed back toward the beach. Three minutes later, she received a hit on the forecastle that knocked out number one 40MM, killing nine seamen and wounding six,

and starting a fire. [Lieutenant (j.g.) Charles Crandall, Engineering Officer] whose additional duty included damage control, moved around the ship trying to put out fires and control flooding [...] At one point he had to go through the well deck. '[Crandall] couldn't run; it was too slippery. There was a quarter-inch of blood on the deck and [Crandall] had to crawl through it.'"
 – Dick Camp (*Iwo Jima Recon*, p. 95)

LCI(G) 449

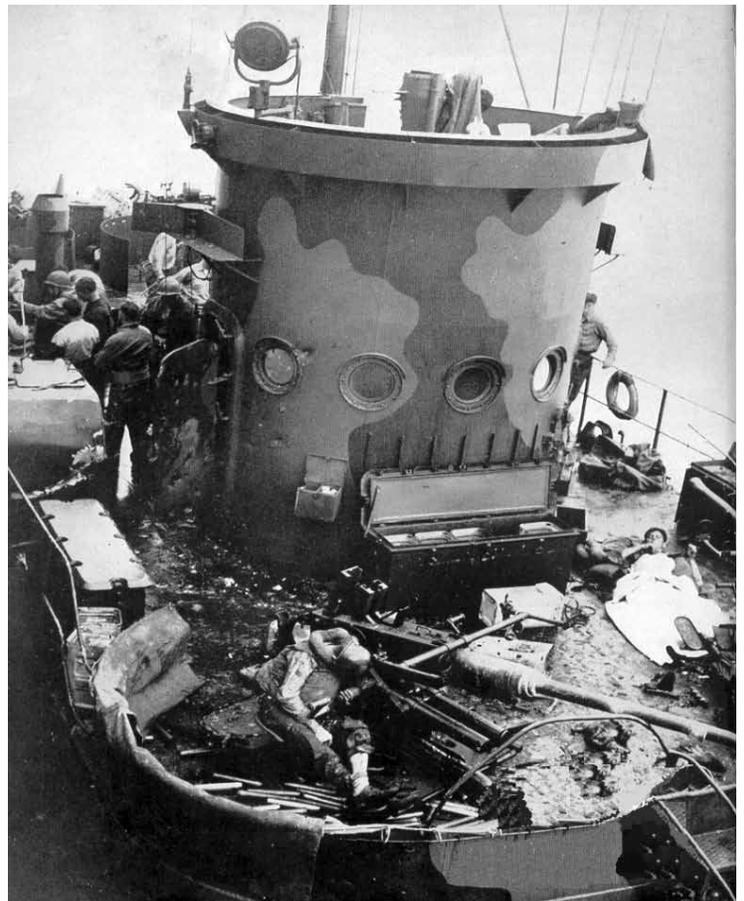


LCI (G) 449 docked at Pearl Harbor (navsource.org)

"Ensign Leo Bedell, the ranking officer [of LCI(G) 449] left unwounded, got the communications rigged and the ship headed away from the beach. He had done a remarkable job by rigging a sound-powered phone to communicate orders to a sailor in the steering aft, the only way to control the landing craft. For this action, he received the Silver Star."

–Dick Camp, (*Iwo Jima Recon*, p. 77)

Lieutenant Rufus G. Herring (far right) receives the Medal of Honor from Secretary of the Navy Forrestal. (Naval History and Heritage Command NH 104043) (American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II; Reilly, p. 213)



LCI (G) 449 alongside USS Terror (CM-5) at Iwo Jima on February 17, 1945. Her commanding officer, Lieutenant (jg) Rufus G. Herring, was awarded the Medal of Honor and the ship was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation. Casualties are evident in the photograph. (Photo courtesy Naval History and Heritage Command NH 65317. Information courtesy American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II; Reilly, p. 214)



LCI(G) 441



LCI (G) 441 comes alongside Nevada (BB-36) to transfer her wounded. She was hit by Japanese artillery at Iwo Jima on February 17, 1945. (Photo courtesy NARA 80G 307124. Information courtesy American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II; Reilly, p. 217)

LCI(G) 457



LCI (G) 457 at Iwo Jima (navsource.org)

LCI(G) 346 and LCI(G) 348



LCI (G) 346 and 348 at Guam, Marianas Islands. (navsource.org, US Navy photo)

UDT operations were successful thanks to the brave LCIs that covered them during their mission. As Jeter A. Isley and Philip A. Crowl, stated in *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, Its Theory and Its Practice in the Pacific* (p. 469), "The heavy coastal guns had been destroyed. General Kuribayashi's authorization for the heavy guns to open fire on the gunboats was perhaps his greatest tactical blunder during the entire campaign. As a result, the U.S. Navy's powerful battleships and heavy cruisers were able to locate the coastal defense guns at the base of Suribachi and amid the cliffs [...] and knock them out. [...] Without this error by the Japanese, it is probable that many threatening coast defense weapons would have remained to take a very heavy toll on [Marines] and supplies from the outset of the ship-to-shore movement. This was unquestionably the most significant role every played by the bold underwater swimmers and their close support gunboats in the course of the Pacific War."

– Dick Camp (*Iwo Jima Recon*, p.121)

SUMMATION OF BATTLE DAMAGE

Ship	Major Battle Damage	Wounded	Dead
LCI(G) 346	Light damage, need minor hull repairs	none reported	
LCI(G) 348	Light damage, need minor hull repairs	none reported	
LCI(G) 438	Moderate damage, parts available, Repairable and will return to duty	2	0
LCI(G) 441	Needs major rewiring, galley and refrigerator destroyed, Repairable and will return to duty	27	6
LCI(G) 449	Conn shot away, gyro and magnetic compasses destroyed, Control gear destroyed, communications gear destroyed, May be able to return to duty if parts can be obtained	20	17
LCI(G) 450	Foc's'le damage, rocket launchers and guns damaged, Repairable and will return to duty	6	0
LCI(G) 457	Damage to forward waterline on hull with interior flooding, Repairable and will return to duty	16	1
LCI(G) 466	Extensive hull damage, most guns destroyed, will require major hull repair	18	5*
LCI(G) 469	Some damage to engine room, many minor holes in hull, Repairable and will return to duty	7	0
LCI(G) 471	Foc's'le destroyed, well deck and ramp sponsons damaged, Repairable and will return to duty	6†	12
LCI(G) 473	Port quad and generators destroyed — to be parted out	30	0
LCI(G) 474	Sunk	16	3
LC(FF) 627	Minor hull damage, fully repairable and will return to duty	0	0

*Includes one man listed as missing

†Includes one man listed as a shock case

In all cases shown above, the ships suffered innumerable holes in their hulls of both a major and minor variety, requiring repair. Only major damage is listed with the prognosis for a ship's probability for return to service.¹⁷

They sang of our praises and wrote of our deeds
deeds of valor and glory
but those who wrote of them never saw my shipmates dead and gory.

Now that the final battle is won
I sit and read their story
and finally came to realize that then those men who died, they were the price of glory. ■

Authors Note: Many other LCIs not mentioned in the above article fought bravely as they covered the D-Day landings of Iwo Jima two days later on February 19, 1945. Many more LCI Gunboat, Mortar, and Rocket Ships covered the landings in the days to follow. We would like to recognize their valuable contribution to the Iwo Jima campaign as well.

A summary of battle damage inflicted on the LCI Gunboats on D-2: February 17, 1942. American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II (Reilly, p. 221)

The American boys aboard those LCI gunboats fought undaunted and courageous that February morning. For among the brave that perished that day at "Bloody Iwo" were sailors, buddies, cousins, grandsons, sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers. One of the fathers in particular aboard the LCI 449 would never get to meet his newborn son that he found out had just been born weeks earlier. Another terribly wounded sailor from the LCI(G) 449 that morning, Bruce Hallett, wrote a poem several years later while sitting and pondering the mission, and concluded with the following passages:

AL6-3(2)

Serial 006468

SECRET

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

R.S. No. 8 827

13 AUG 1945

6th Endorsement on
CO USS LCI(G)473,
secret ltr., dated
1 March 1945.

From: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.

Subject: Action report on Invasion of IWO JIMA.

1. Forwarded.

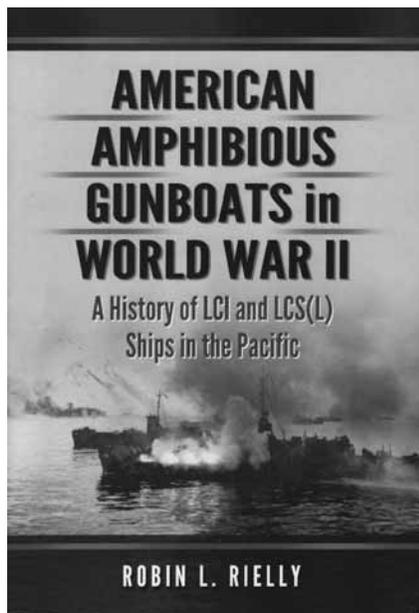
2. The courage, effectiveness and fighting spirit of these small craft, lightly armed, vulnerable in construction, and manned by a mere handful of officers and men of brief naval experience, are not merely in keeping with our finest traditions and standards but add appreciably thereto.

C. W. NIMITZ

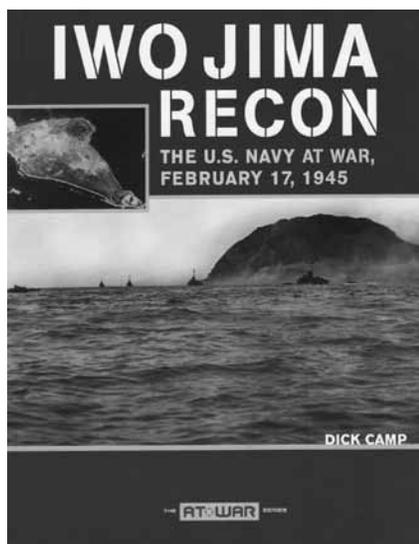
This endorsement by Admiral Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Fleet was one of the finest recognitions of the LCIs and crews in WWII. (USS LCI-G 473, Action Report on Invasion of Iwo Jima, dated 13 August 1945)

SOURCES:

1. Robin L. Rielly, *American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II: A History of the LCI and LCS(L) Ships in the Pacific* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2013), pp. 208-235



2. Dick Camp, *Iwo Jima Recon: The U.S. Navy at War, February 17, 1945* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2007)



3. Isley, Jeter A. and Philip A. Crowl. *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, Its Theory and Its Practice in the Pacific*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

* Reprinted from Patrick O'Donnell's, *Into the Rising Sun*, pp. 221; 303 (New York, NY: Free Press, 2002):

(George Garand and Truman Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations: History of US Marine Corps Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, 1971), pp. 455-461. No oral history account of Kuribayashi's actions exist, but one can logically assume he read this crucial report signaling the beginning of the invasion. Details of the report are on page 461 of Garand and Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES RECORDS

ADMINISTRATION (College Park, MD):

- USS LCI(G) 471, Action Report on Pre-Invasion Activities of Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 17 February 1945
- USS LCI(G) 473, After-Action Report on Invasion of Iwo Jima
- USS LCI(G) 474, Action Report, Assault on Iwo Jima, 17 February 1945.
- Report of Action in the Iwo Jima Operation, Underwater Demolition Team #12, 5 March 1945.

USS LCI National Association Inc

Financial Reports

We are publishing the Financial Results of the LCI Association Operations for the period of June 2011 thru December 2014, this covers 3 years and 7 months. During this time, the expenses of the LCI Association to publish the Elsie Item Magazine, maintain the USSLCI.Org website, and the expenses of administration have remained consistent at approximately \$2,350.00 per month. While the cost of everything has gone up, the LCI Association has been able to make reductions in these areas that have enabled us to keep this amount consistent. As expected there has been a natural decline in our WWII veteran members. This has led to a related decrease in receipts of Dues and paid subscription for the ELSIE ITEM. Fortunately, and only through Generous Cash Donations and the purchase of LCI Branded Products by our members, have allowed the LCI Association to remain viable for the last few years.

Robert E Wright Jr., Acting Secretary and Treasurer

USS LCI National Association, Inc				
Balance Sheet				
As of				
	May 31, 2012	May 31, 2013	May 31, 2014	Dec 31, 2014
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Total Checking/Savings	24,642	19,944	26,260	18,694
Accounts Receivable	-	-	211	201
Total Current Assets	24,642	19,944	26,471	18,895
TOTAL ASSETS	24,642	19,944	26,471	18,895
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Equity				
Opening Equity	25,688	24,642	19,944	26,471
Net Revenue less Expense	(1,045)	(4,698)	6,527	(7,776)
Ending Equity	24,642	19,944	26,471	18,695
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	24,642	19,944	26,471	18,695
USS LCI National Association, Inc				
Statement of Revenues and Expenses				
	Year Jun 2011 - May 2012	Year Jun 2012 - May 2013	Year Jun 2013 - May 2014	7 Months Jun 2014 - Dec 2014
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Revenues				
Donations	9,124	4,387	9,958	2,769
LCI Products (Net of Costs)	4,510	2,869	3,526	2,152
Dues and ELSIE Subscriptions	13,635	16,478	21,004	3,565
Investment Income	334	89	15	0
Total Net Revenue	27,603	23,823	34,503	8,487
Expenses				
ELSIE ITEM Publication	13,548	11,253	13,715	8,445
USS LCI Website	-	1,260	690	560
Administration	15,101	16,008	13,571	7,258
Total Expense	28,648	28,521	27,976	16,263
Net Revenue less Expense	(1,045)	(4,698)	6,527	(7,776)
Average Monthly Income	2300	1985	2875	707
Average Monthly Expenses	2387	2377	2331	2323
Donations of Cash & LCI Products	13,634	7,256	13,484	4,921
% of Revenue	49.4%	30.5%	39.1%	58.0%

God's Favorite Day



"THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT," Psalm 118:24 (NIV)

I am sure we have all seen the commercial with the talking camel walking through the office saying, "Mike, Mike, Mike! What day is it, Mike?" Then answering his own question with, "Hump Day, Yeah!" Obviously a camel's favorite day is "Hump Day."

But, do we know what God's favorite day is? Unequivocally, and without hesitation, God's favorite day is today—not Sunday or Monday or even "Hump Day"—Wednesday.

God knows that the most important period of time is always "the now." The only day you can better the past, or prepare for the future, is today. God knows that our "nows" will soon become our yesterdays, and that if we live each "now" well, we will have no regrets. God also knows that our "nows" determine our future, and that when the future becomes "now," it will be good if we have lived each past moment well.

Today is the only day we can enjoy. We can't enjoy yesterday, it is only a memory. We can't enjoy tomorrow, it is only a possibility. And whether or not we enjoy today is up to us. Every day we live is a God-given day, and it should be a God-gladdened day. So, receive each day as a gift from God. Every second of every minute, every minute of every hour, and every hour of every day, is a gift from God.

Let's begin by focusing on the present. The Psalmist didn't write, "Yesterday was the day the Lord made." He didn't write, "Tomorrow will be the day the Lord will make." The verse speaks of today: "This is the day which the Lord has made." You see, the first key to making the most of today is this: Live for today. There are two days that will rob you of the joy of today—yesterday and tomorrow. R. G. Lee said: "Yesterday is in the tomb of time; tomorrow is in the womb of time; only now is yours." There are so many people who crucify today between two thieves—yesterday and tomorrow. God claims the name of "I Am"—not "I Was" or "I Will Be."

Then, we need to fix our priorities. Have you ever heard someone talk about trying to "save time?" Well, we don't really save time—we spend it. We must spend it wisely.

Today there is a time for leisure, there's a time for labor; there's a time for learning, there's a time for laughter; there's a time for lifting, there's a time for loving. Today comes only once and will never return. God has given us these twenty-four hours to use as we will. We can waste it or use it for good. What we

do today is important because we are exchanging a day of our life for it. We know that the real cost of a thing is the amount of our life we spend obtaining it.

When tomorrow comes this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something we have traded for it. We must not forget the price we paid for it. Let's spend it for gain, not loss; good not evil; success not failure.

And finally, we need to fulfill our promise. To put it another way, whatever you need to do, do it today. Zig Ziglar, said: "If you will do what you ought to do when you ought to do it, then you can do what you want to do when you want to do it." So if you want to make the most out of every day, do what needs to be done today—today. Actor Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry character was fond of saying, "Go ahead, make my day!" Perhaps our response to the gift of the next twenty-four hours needs to be, "Go ahead, God—make my day!" Only then can we rejoice in the fullness of God. Joy is an act of the will. It's a choice.

An unknown poet penned these words, entitled "It's Up to You."

*Have you made someone happy, or made someone sad?
What did you do with the day that you had?
God gave it to you to do just as you would,
Did you do what was wicked, or do what was good?
Did you hand out a smile, or just give them a frown,
Did you lift someone up-or push someone down?
Did you lighten some load or some progress impede,
Did you look for a rose or just gather a weed?
What did you do with your beautiful day,
God gave it to you. Did you throw it away?*

Historical rumor has it that an "old salt" from a long time ago, Christopher Columbus, kept a diary on his way to the New World. It was not an easy voyage. The men were on the verge of mutiny. Many of them wanted to turn around. Yet every day the last entry that he would write in his log was: "Today we moved westward!"

I hope you will be able to write in your "Ship's Log" each day this next year, "I moved forward." That's my hope for each of you in 2015. After all, God's favorite day is today.

Agape,

Mike

The Landing Craft Infantry (L) Model is available now!



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Please read : This is a LCI(L). The Box depicts a Square Conn on a 1-350 hull. The actual model is a Round Conn on a 351 version hull . It has the 5 20mm guns. The ships numbers are incorrect too

Description: This Model was out of Production for 30 years. Many members remember this same model from their younger days. The new owners of the company have released this for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. This is a 1:160 model, so it is 12 inches long. Simple to paint and assemble. It does require the use of model cement which should be available locally.

LCI Model \$25 each Quantity _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

Shipping: First Model \$7 additional models \$3 each Amount Paid: \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID: \$ _____

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Any other Information contact: **Robert E Wright Jr, Secretary**

At: rewrightcpa@gmail.com or 517. 548-1026

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American Amphibious Gunboats in WWII \$50

This book which was written by the historian of the LCS(L)(3) Association includes the best published history of the development of the LCI Gunboats and their actions in WWII from the Solomons to the final battle at Okinawa. About 230 of the books 370 pages are devoted to the LCI(G) operations in the Pacific.

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Please complete this form and mail it to the address indicated below with your first year's dues.

DUES ARE \$35.00 PER YEAR, June 1 through May 31.

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Name _____

Which LCI did you serve on? _____ What was your Rank/Rate? _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____ / _____

E-mail Address: _____

Alternate/Relative's E-mail Address: _____

(This is so we have a family member or friend we can contact if we cannot reach you)

Name of Alternate Contact: _____ Relationship to contact: _____

Occupation or Former Occupation: _____

II. For Application as a Relative or Interested Person:

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____ / _____

Are you related to someone who served on an LCI? Yes No

If so, what is the relationship? *(i.e. father, grandfather, uncle, etc.)* _____

What is/was his name? _____

On which LCI did he serve? _____ Email Address: _____

(If unknown, or if you do not have a relative who served on an LCI, leave blank)

Please send this application with your check (**\$35**) made payable to:

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Mail to:

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Want to tell your story?*

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2014 Portland Reunion – More Great Photos!

*Photos Courtesy of Marvin Carpenter
(LCI 455), and wife, Lucy Ree*



*(L to R) Jim Hale (LCI 455), Marvin
Carpenter (LCI 455), and John
Cummer (LCI 502)*



*Our President and Chaplain,
Mike Gattton, with Ellie (right)
& Kiley Shaw. These two
ladies put on a wonderful
instrumental and singing
performance at the LCI
Reunion Banquet Dinner
on Saturday, September 27,
2014.*



*Joe Flynn at the LCI
Memorial Ceremony,
September 27, 2014.*