

## MY EXPERIENCES ABOARD LCI 1021

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I SERVED AS ENGINEERING/SUPPLY OFFICER ABOARD LCI 1021 FROM BEFORE IT WAS COMMISSIONED UNTIL THE END OF THE WW II IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC.

THE CREW OF LCI 1021 WAS ASSEMBLED AT THE LCI UNDERWAY TRAINING CENTER AT SOLOMON ISLAND ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY IN EARLY 1944..TWO ENLISTED MEMBERS OF THE CREW HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE ABOARD LCI'S IN THE PACIFIC THEATER OF THE WAR.THE REMAINDER OF THE CREW WERE RAW RECRUITS.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE CREW WAS LTJG KORNFELD A GRADUATE OF OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL IN CIVILIAN LIFE HE WAS A CPA IN GREAT FALLS, MONTANA.THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER ENS.WALLY BUTNER WAS A MUSTANG WITH PREVIOUS COMBAT EXPERIENCE HE WAS ALSO A NATIVE OF MONTANA .I WAS THE ENGINEERING AND SUPPLY OFFICER.I WAS A GRADUATE OF THE MIDSHIPMANS SCHOOL AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.THE ENGINEERING COMPONENT OF THAT SCHOOL WAS STATIONED ON THE OLD BATTLESHIP ILL. WHICH WAS REFURBISHED AS A CLASSROOM AND DORMATORY.IT WAS TIED UP AT THE FOOT OF 135<sup>TH</sup> STREET ON THE HUDSON RIVER.THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER WAS ENSIGN JOHN B. SWIFT, A GRADUATE OF GA TECH.HE WAS A RESIDENT OF ALABAMA.

AT SOLOMONS ISLAND WE BEGAN TWO WEEKS OF TRAINING ABOARD AN LCI.THE PERMANENT CREW TRAINED US ON ALL OPERATIONS.WE CRUISED THE ENTIRE BAY REGION WITH DAY AND NIGHT OPERATIONS.

AFTER SOLOMONS THE CREW TRAVELED TOGETHER TO PORTLAND OREGON WHERE WE BOARDED THE LCI 1021.AFTER A COUPLE OF WEEKS OF OUTFITTING IT WAS COMMISSIONED AND AFTER LOADING SUPPLIES AND WATER WE WERE READY TO GO.DURING THAT TIME,OFFICERS AND CREW WERE FREE TO HAVE LIBERTY ASHORE AT NIGHT.

AS ENGINEERING OFFICER, I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MACHINERY ON BOARD. THE PROPULSION SYSTEM CONSISTED OF TWO QUADS EACH HAVING FOUR TRUCK DIESEL ENGINES COUPLED TO ONE SHAFT THERE WAS.A VARIABLE PITCH PROPELLER ON EACH SHAFT. THE PROPS COULD BE REVERSED TO AID IN LEAVING A BEACH AFTER A LANDING.THERE WAS ALSO A LARGE GASOLINE ENGINE DRIVING A WINCH WHICH PULLED IN AN ANCHOR TO PULL OFF A BEACH.THERE WERE OTHER SMALL ELECTRIC MOTORS.

THE CREW HAD A BUNK ROOM AND A DINING ROOM.THE DINING ROOM ALSO SERVED AS A PROTECTED AREA FOR THE 200 TROOPS THAT THE LCI I COULD CARRY.THE GALLY COULD ONLY SERVE THE CREW AND OFFICERS OF THE LCI; NOT THE TROOPS.

THE OFFICERS EACH HAD A SMALL STATE ROOM.THERE WAS A SO-CALLED WARD ROOM FOR THE OFFICERS,BUT IN FACT IT WAS JUST A BOOTH FOR DINING ,PLANNING,READING ETC.SHOWERS FOR ALL OFFICERS AND CREW WERE COLD SALT WATER. FRESH WATER WAS ONLY FOR DRINKING AND COOKING.

WHEN IN A COMBAT ZONE, MAIL WAS OUR ONLY CONTACT WITH THE CIVILIAN WORLD.WE ONLY PICKED UP MAIL WHEN AT MILITARY BASES. THE SHIP'S RADIO COULD ONLY BE USED FOR OFFICIAL MESSAGES.THERE WAS NO RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE CREW.I SUSCRIBED TO THE PONY EDITION OF TIME MAGAZINE.AS FAR AS I KNOW,I WAS THE ONLY ONE ABOARD THAT SUSCRIBED TO ANYTHING.IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ME TO READ IT AND I PASSED IT AROUND TO OTHERS..

WHEN WE LEFT PORTLAND, WE TRAVELED WITH THE AID OF A RIVER PILOT, DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AND THEN DOWN THE COAST TO SAN DIEGO. THERE WE JOINED TWO OTHER LCI'S OF OUR GROUP. WE WOULD OPERATE MOSTLY WITH THOSE TWO FOR QUITE A WHILE.

WE WERE IN SAN DIEGO ABOUT TWO WEEKS. WE PRACTICED BEACH LANDINGS AROUND SAN DIEGO FOR A WEEK. THEN FOR ANOTHER WEEK, WE WENT UP THE COAST TO OCEANSIDE, CA. WHERE WE LOADED MARINES AND PRACTICED LANDINGS WITH THEM. IT WAS GOOD TRAINING FOR BOTH.

FROM SAN DIEGO THE THREE LCI'S WENT TO PEARL HARBOR FOR FINAL OUTFITTING AND SUPPLIES. WE WERE THERE ABOUT TWO WEEKS. FOR THE FINAL TWO DAYS WE TIED UP AT A DOWNTOWN HARBOR, AND THE CREW HAD LIBERTY AT WAKIKI BEACH. WE COULD VISIT THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTEL WHICH THE NAVY HAD TAKEN OVER FOR SUBMARINER R & R.

WHEN WE LEFT PEARL HARBOR, WE TRAVELED IN A CONVOY OF THE SAME THREE LCI'S THAT WE OPERATED WITH BEFORE. I HAD TO TAKE MY TURN ON WATCH IN THE CONNING TOWER WITH THE OTHER THREE OFFICERS. OUR OBJECTIVE FOR THIS TRIP WAS THE NAVAL BASE AT MILNE BAY ON THE TIP OF THE ISLAND OF PAPUA, NEW GUINEA. AT THAT TIME, MUCH OF THE CENTRAL PACIFIC HAD NOT BEEN SECURED, SO WE HAD TO TAKE A LONG ROUTE AROUND THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE LONG TIME AT SEA STRETCHED OUR RESOURCES AND OF COURSE WE HAD COLD SALT WATER SHOWERS.

WE PASSED SOUTH OF GUADACANAL AND THEN ON TO MILNE BAY. WE WERE SCHEDULED TO JOIN THE FLEET THAT WOULD INVADE THE PHILIPPINES. WE WERE NOW PART OF THE SEVENTH FLEET THAT GENERAL MCARTHUR REFERRED TO AS "MY NAVY".

WE FIRST HAD TO MAKE TRIPS TO FINCHAVEN AND HOLLANDIA ON PAPUA, NEW GUINEA. THEN WE WENT TO A SMALL ATOL NAMED MANUS. IN THE LAGOON AT MANUS A TREMENDOUS FLEET HAD ASSEMBLED FOR THE INVASION OF THE PHILIPPINES. WE WERE NOT PART OF THE INITIAL INVASION FLEET THAT WOULD LAND AT THE TOWN OF TACLOBAN ON THE ISLAND OF LEYTE IN THE PHILIPPINES. IT WAS AT TACLOBAN THAT GENERAL MCARTHUR MADE HIS FAMOUS "I HAVE RETURNED SPEECH"

OUR GROUP OF THREE LCI'S TRAVELED TO LEYTE ABOUT A WEEK LATER. FROM THIS POINT THE THREE LCI'S NO LONGER OPERATED TOGETHER ALL OF THE TIME. ABOUT THIS TIME THE JAPS HAD BEGUN THEIR KAMAKAZE ATTACKS IN ERNEST. OUR JOB AT THAT TIME WAS TO MAKE SMOKE IN THE HARBOR TO PROTECT THE SUPPLY SHIPS THAT WERE LOCATED THERE. AT NIGHT IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL TO SEE JAP SCOUT PLANES FLYING AT VERY LOW ALTITUDES BENEATH THE SMOKE.

SOON WE BEGAN OUR OWN OPERATIONS. AN LCI COULD CARRY ONE ARMY COMPANY, USUALLY 200 MEN AND OFFICERS. THERE WERE A COUPLE OF OPERATIONS ON THE ISLAND OF LEYTE. THE LCI HAD A VERY SHALLOW DRAFT AND WAS ABLE TO NEGOTIATE THE CHANNELS BETWEEN THE ISLANDS. SO THAT INTER ISLAND OPERATIONS WERE POSSIBLE. THE JAPS WOULD NOT WASTE A KAMAKAZE ON AN LCI UNLESS WE HAD TROOPS ABOARD. THEREFORE THE TROOPS HAD TO STAY INSIDE.

I REMEMBER ONE OPERATION FROM TACLOBAN ON LEYTE TO THE ISLAND OF PANAY WHERE WE LANDED NEAR THE CAPITOL OF ILO ILO. ANOTHER ONE WAS FROM LEYTE TO THE ISLAND OF LOS NEGROS. THESE OPERATIONS WERE UNOPPOSED AT THE BEACH WHERE WE LANDED.

ONE OPERATION THAT HAD SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION WAS NEAR THE CAPITAL OF LUZON JUST BELOW THE ENTRANCE OF SUBIC BAY. THAT WAS A VERY LARGE OPERATION INVOLVING LARGE AND SMALL SHIPS AND LOTS OF AIR SUPPORT.

THE LONGEST OPERATION WAS FROM LEYTE TO ZAMBOANGAO ON THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO. AS THE END OF THE WAR APPROACHED, WE CARRIED PHILLIPANO IRREGULARS FROM ISLANDS WHERE THEY WERE IN ACTION BACK TO THEIR HOMES. ONE SUCH TRIP WAS TO AN ISLAND IN THE CHANNEL BETWEEN CEBU AND MINDANAO. IN THAT CHANNEL ONE OF THE LARGEST SEA BATTLES OF THE WAR OCCURRED WHEN THE US SEVENTH FLEET DESTROYED A MAJOR JAP FLEET BY "CROSSING THE T"

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, WE ALREADY HAD ORDERS FOR THE INVASION OF JAPAN. IT WAS NOT GOING TO BE EASY FOR LCI'S SO I WAS GLAD THAT THEY DROPPED THE BOMB.