



LCT Flotilla 41 Staff

Leonard Baker - Ensign
LCT Flotilla 41 Staff

Okinawa, we were to take over 50 LCTs there in Hawaii (Wapio). So we did and for the remainder of the War we ran amphibious exercises for the Marines and also did some "lighter" work unloading supplies there at Pearl Harbor.

One interesting incident there was that I ran into a Warrant Officer I knew from Manitowoc (Wisconsin) and he invited me to lunch at the subbase mess. He and his friends queried me as to what LCTs were, and when they asked me how many Chiefs we had and I replied "none", they couldn't believe it was the same Navy. (We did have a motor mac make chief shortly after that.)

The war ended while I was still at Pearl, and eventually I got a ride on an LSM back to San Francisco, and home to New York one day before Christmas 1945. Some time later I became active in the Reserve--first with a Surface Division, then commanded SAT 3-1 at NSD, Bayonne for a period, and then transferred to ONR 3-1 at Brookhaven National Laboratory where I was employed. I commanded that unit for a 3 year tour and retired as an O-5 with 26 years of total service.

Following Indoctrination School at Fort Schuyler, a tour of duty at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as engineering expeditor building two YRCs (submarine rescue chamber diving bells) and about a year at SupShips in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, building and underway testing of new construction submarines, the Navy sent me to Amphibious Diesel Engineering School at General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan That was in the summer of 1944.

I then received orders to ATB, Solomons MD for LCI assignment. However, I had just made j.g. and when I arrived I was "too senior" for an LCI engineering billet. I was assigned to the LCT Training Flotilla at Solomons (I think it was Flotilla One) as assistant engineer.

While on one of the training cruises, I was with an LCT Group that was caught in a hurricane which scattered us all over the Chesapeake, with several on the beach from Fort Storey to ATB Bradford. The task of recovering all those boats fell to me, and it was quite an experience.

Late in 1944, with ATB Solomons scheduled to close, I found myself sharing a BOQ room with the former commodore of LCT Flotilla Ten--just returned from Europe. His staff lacked an engineering officer, so I grabbed the billet. His name was Bill Wright; the Personnel Officer was Jim McFadzean; the doctor was Sam Staggers; and I can't remember our Supply Officer except I remember how he suffered when seasick. These officers, together with the enlisted staff formed up as the Flotilla staff for LCT Flotilla Forty One.

After many repeated delays, we finally sailed from Norfolk as passengers on an LST. The scuttlebutt was that we were to take over an LCT Flotilla in Okinawa in preparation for an invasion of southern Honshu (Japan). The LST trip, through the Canal, took 30 days to reach Pearl Harbor, where Cdr. Wright went ashore to report to ADCOMPHIBSPAC. He returned with the news that plans were changed, and instead of



Staff of LCT Flotilla 41 taken on the ramp of an LCT