

needed more officers like myself, and that the 949's crew had and was working hard! A "TVG" bygosh!

Relieved that the fear of confiscating a Magnavox console was over, I allowed it to come out of storage minus its cabinet-soundbox. We did enjoy better music though and continued to feast on Chef Zommick's cuisine, but with our new stainless cutlery!

Later, I became Commander Ewald's First Lieutenant. This was at his supply depot after I decommissioned LCT 1037 and was awaiting points to be on my way back to the States. He even provided me with a very nice letter of recommendation when I left for home.

BEER

Several times, when there was tight security carrying a load of beer, we would use the center void and flooded outboards trick. It was always successful. For example, one Army 2nd LT, that I threw off the LCT when he alleged that we had stolen some beer, came back with a Provost Marshall's order that permitted he and his MPs to search the LCT. They did from stem to stern including opening up the flooded outboard voids but they could not find the 200 cases of beer. We enjoyed their frustration...and later the beer!

I also can remember the watch coming down to quarters on one beer load to say 'Skipper, we won't be able to get any beer this load because they are stacking the cases evenly.'

My response was 'Let's hope that they didn't count the rows and we will take one whole one.' It worked and we had more beer than we would have ordinarily taken had it been load aboard in the helter-skelter style our beer loads were before.

Then there was the night that Alvin Summers got caught stashing away some bottled beer into the starboard heat exchanger void and had to "unload" his 20 cases back out. The cardboard cases got wet and Al "clumsily" dropped a few that enable him to leave a few bottles for later. Summers would tie a string around his beer bottle's neck and lower it overboard to cool because the 949's refrigerator was real sick.

HOMER ABRAMS

Homer Abrams and I were sharing a watch one day underway. Homer and I often talked. But this day Homer asked me if I knew about how the USA was discriminating against the American Indian. I thought he was talking about the past and said so to him. He became very serious, teared and replied that prejudice and disparate treatment against the Indian still existed. It was then that this naive Ensign learned that although Homer was required to serve his country in

time of war, as we all were, he, unlike the rest of us and because he was an American Indian, was denied the right to vote.

I often have thought about Homer's statement and of its devastation to him. It brought back other incidences I had observed while in the Navy in WW II how the military discriminated against Jews and blacks. After the war and college, I saw the same thing happening in business and industry. In fact, as a personnel manager, I implemented policies and recruitment/promotion actions that were in fact discriminatory against minorities and women. I am not proud of this part of my career.

But, I am grateful to have known Homer Abrams because he eventually did influence my direction. This came after I had read Bend My Heart on a Wounded Knee, which brought back a vivid recall of Homer's unnecessary pain, and when I had opportunities to redeem myself through equal employment opportunity programs, labor negotiations, training and in who I hired, recognized and promoted.

I only wish that Homer had lived so that I could tell him this story personally--and of my personal satisfaction of having a part in and seeing integrated organizations compete and prosper.

CALENDAR EXCERPTS - 1944

7 October--Allied Forces invade Suluan and Dinagat Islands at entrance to Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands.

8 October--Homon Island invaded.

20 October--Allied Forces land on Leyte.

23 November--From the "At Sea" Thanksgiving menu of LCT(6) 948--Ship's Cook Martin Murphy:

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| Fruit Cocktail | Brown Gravy | Bread & Butter |
| Soup | Cranberry Sauce | |
| Turkey | Ice Cold Lemonade | |
| Potatoes | Pies: Mincemeat, | |
| String Beans | Pumpkin and Apple | |

Fred Halkett was assigned to several LCTs in LCT Group 24 of Flotilla 8, including the 947 and 949. LCT Group 24 participated in the island invasions in the South Pacific from all of the New Guinea area, to Biak, then Morotai and finally Leyte in the Philippines. Fred has donated a copy of his history of Group 24 which includes a calendar of events, invasion data and various stories including the ones above. He is a resident of Norfolk, Virginia.

