He was reaching for a line when the sea swell rode the small boat up under the ship. He had to be returned to the States.

Next was Saipan in the Marianas Island group to embark 1st Marine Division personnel, their water buffalo tanks, and ammo for Iwo Jima.

19 February, 1945, we were part of the D-Day invading force at Iwo Jima. We disembarked Marine personnel and their amphibious tanks while standing off the beach. We did not beach until D plus 3 days. Since no anchoring positions off Iwo were available, we would steam at night in convoy. While awaiting beaching orders we saw our first Jap action when shells from Mt. Suribachi dropped around us. There were no casualties of either the LCT or LST crews. We left the Iwo Jima area 5 days after D-Day.

From Iwo to Leyte, in the Philippines we picked up small cargo and then went to Ulithi (approximate position 10 degrees N - 160 degrees E) to load men and equipment of the 3rd Marine Div. Our LST skipper had orders along with other LST’s to round the island gunwale of the small boat. He was reaching for a line when the sea swell rode the small boat up under the ship. He had to be returned to the States.

War-time photos of Wallace Nelson (left), and Burman Elkins (right).

Below, left to right: Skipper Dick Baruth, Wally Nelson and Burman Elkins pose for a photograph during the recent LCT reunion in Omaha, Nebraska.

Then and Now . . .

We backed into the harbor and blinker signals from the port commander demanded the captain report ASAP to the port commander. Entire crew thought we would finally lose him and he’d be relieved of duty. No such luck! He came back. We spent about 3 days in dry dock getting the LST and LCT repaired. Headed north.

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