

FLOTILLA



NEWSLETTER OF THE LCT FLOTILLAS OF WORLD WAR II
HONORING THE MEN WHO SERVED ON THE LANDING CRAFT OF THE U.S. AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

Volume 3, No.1

May 2002

WWII MARK V STILL SAILING

LCT-103 (OUTER ISLAND) SEES DUTY ON LAKE SUPERIOR

It was a very warm day up in Bayfield, Wisconsin, on Lake Superior, when my father and I went aboard the *Outer Island* last August. Securely moored in a protected inlet on the big lake's southern shore, the old LCT was a stark contrast to the sailing boats and other craft that shared this space at the small marina.

Formerly the LCT(5)-103, the old landing craft was really showing its age, battered and dented after nearly 60 years of "active duty". But despite many renovations and "adjustments" to civilian life, we were amazed to find so many original parts and fixtures that date back to the War years.

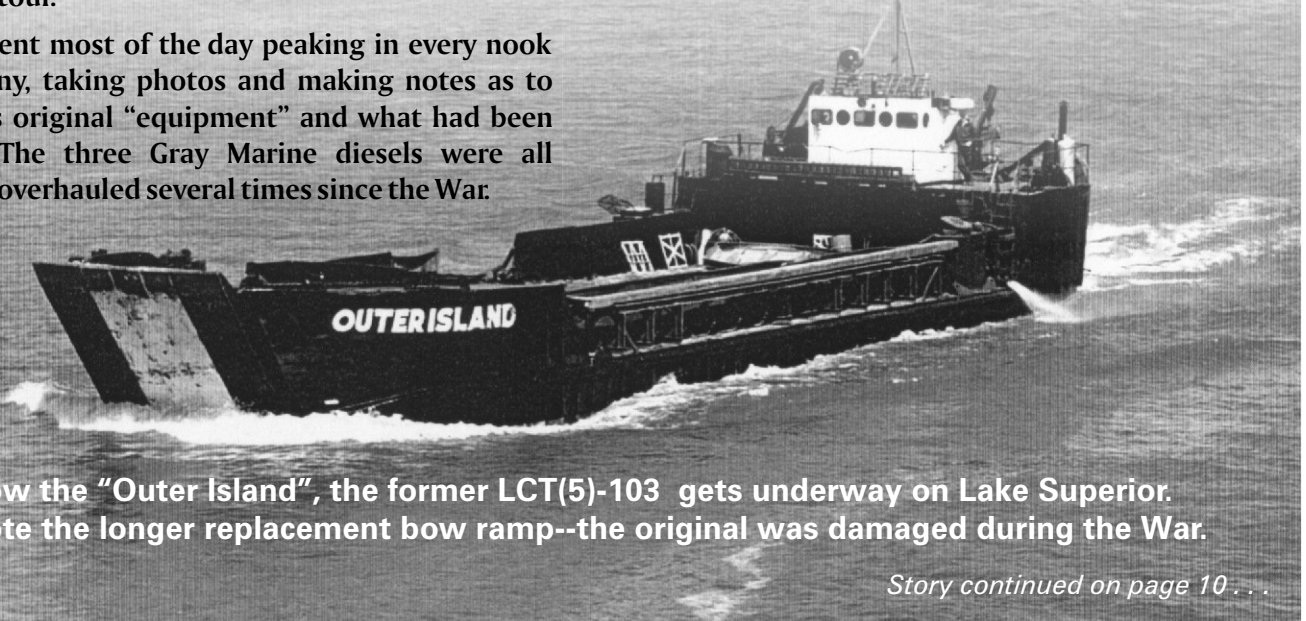
My father, Douglas Swanson, had served on another early Mark V, the LCT-81, and saw action in both the Aleutians and Central Pacific. He had not set foot on one since the War--needless to say, I was given the royal tour.

We spent most of the day peaking in every nook and cranny, taking photos and making notes as to what was original "equipment" and what had been altered. The three Gray Marine diesels were all original--overhauled several times since the War.

Despite modern hatch covers over the engine rooms to provide additional ventilation, the smell of diesel fuel and oil coupled with the heat, made it almost unbearable down there. I cannot imagine being on the "black gang", working below decks in the South Pacific!

The current owners of the *Outer Island* use the boat to haul vehicles and supplies and to perform work on docks and piers throughout the Apostle Islands. There are also plans for more refurbishing to bring the craft up to code and better provide these services.

Robert Erickson, the current skipper of the *Outer Island*, had granted us permission to inspect the LCT that day. Rob's uncle, the late Edwin Erickson, was the man who first captained her just after the War and was actively involved in her operation until his death in March of 2001.



Now the "Outer Island", the former LCT(5)-103 gets underway on Lake Superior. Note the longer replacement bow ramp--the original was damaged during the War.

Story continued on page 10 . . .