



## ORIGINAL CREW OF LCT-213

*Standing left to right:*

Harold Knecht (from PA); Ensign E. E. Wilson (NY); Lawrence Wiess (NY).

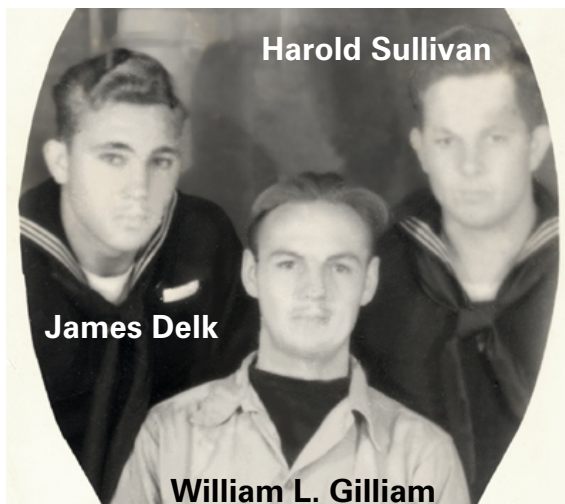
*Front row left to right:*

Leo Gildea (PA); Chester Russolowski (PA); George Anthony (PA); Michael Galvin (MA); Roy Thomas (NJ); Charles Clark (PA); Robert Naney (IN).

Photos on this page are from James Delk's wartime collection.

**7+8 June 1944**--We unload cargo from ships at sea and beach for Army to off-load. Since we have no anchor to assist in retraction from the beach we have to dry out.

**9 June 1944**--We are beached overloaded with equipment. Due to contour of beach our deck buckled. We are ordered out of action.



**15 June 1944**--Under tow by an LST headed for Portland England For repairs. We encounter heavy seas, thinking we were sinking the skipper gave the abandon ship order. The skipper, Leo, Chet and myself stayed aboard and rode it out. The rest of the crew was picked up by a British Navy Ship. The British always kept me aboard their ships. According to Bill Gilliam and George Anthony, they were more than generous with the rum. Several of our boys got a little high. After repairs were made we returned to Normandy. By Sept of 1944 most of the original crew had returned stateside. We were given a thirty-day leave and sent to serve in the Pacific.

## The Pineapples

During the Sicily Operations, the sea was so rough we could not cook, and because we had no fresh provisions, we had to eat a lot of "C" rations. One day I went below from the pilothouse and found Chester Russolowski (Chet) our bosons mate, and our cook, Charles Gildea, eating from a gallon can of pineapples. I asked them to share and got a negative reply.

Chet was always a cut-up, and every spoonful he ate he would go, "*mmm boy, this pineapple is sooo good!*" He never did give me one spoonful! It was then that I put a hex on him. I told him I hoped that his greediness made him sick!

About thirty minutes later, we had to secure one of the pontoons alongside. And Chet had to get on it to secure a line. It was pitching up and down and about that time all of the pineapple came up. He got sick, sick, sick. I never knew of him getting sick before. After that incident Chet always passed the pineapples by.

James Delk sent me a copy of the original action report filed by Admiral R.L. Conolly, Cmdr. Task Force 86. As the National Archives has no records from LCT Flotilla 11, this report is most valuable as it describes the LCT involvement during the Sicily invasion. At the end of his report the Admiral states, "Too much praise cannot be given to the LCTs for their work during and subsequent to the actual operation." Today Mr. Delk resides in Stockbridge, Georgia.

