

M/V *HUSKY II*
(LCI(L)-653)
(USS *Avocet*)
Seldovia Harbor
Seldovia
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Alaska

HAER AK-52
HAER AK-52

PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

M/V Husky II
(USS LCI(L) 653)
(USS *Avocet*)

HAER No. AK-52

Location: Before being scrapped in 2010, the *Husky II* was located in Seldovia Harbor, Seldovia, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska.

Type of Craft: Infantry landing craft, large

Trade: Troop carrier; later, pilot boat, then fishing tender

Official Number: 283992

Navy Designation: LCI(L) 653 (later AMCU-16, then MHC-16)

Class: LCI(L) 351 class

Principal Dimensions:

1944:	
Length (bp):	152.4'
Length (oa):	158'-5½"
Beam:	23'-3"
Depth:	11'-3"
Draft (landing):	3'-0" forward, 5'-0" aft
Draft (maximum):	5'-8"
Displacement (landing):	250 long tons
Displacement (loaded):	387 long tons
Designed shaft horsepower	1,800
Maximum speed (loaded):	16 knots ¹
1964:	
Gross register tonnage:	296
Net register tonnage:	201 ²

(It should be noted that draft, displacement, and tonnages were subject to alteration over time as well as variations in measurement.)

Propulsion: Diesel engines driving twin screws

Dates of Construction: Keel laid: June 14, 1944
Launched: July 14, 1944
Commissioned: July 21, 1944

¹ *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Navy Department, Naval History Division, 1970), 470.

² *Record of the American Bureau of Shipping*, 1964, 625.

Designer: U.S. Navy, Bureau of Ships, Washington, D.C., and George Lawley & Son Corp., Boston, Massachusetts

Builder: New Jersey Shipbuilding, Barber, New Jersey

Original Owner: U.S. Navy

Final Owner: City of Seldovia, Alaska

Names: USS *LCI(L) 653* (1944–52)
USS *Avocet* (1952–1960)
Keystone (ca. 1962)
Husky II (1962–2010)

Disposition: Scrapped

Significance: USS *LCI(L) 653* was one of over 900 large infantry landing craft built in the United States during World War II. The U.S. Navy designed these ocean-going troop transports at the instigation of the British Admiralty to carry about 200 assault troops for a few days and then land them, via bow gangways, onto a beach in combat. *LCI(L) 653* took part in combat landings and general ferrying duties in the Philippines during 1944 and 1945. Laid up after its return to the U.S. in 1946, the vessel was converted into a coastal minesweeper in 1953, only to be decommissioned again in 1955 and struck from the navy list in 1960. Mariner Oddmund Sumstad purchased it in 1962, renamed it *Husky II*, and put it to use as a pilot boat on the Kuskokwim River in southwest Alaska. Oddmund’s nephew Ronald Sumstad bought the boat in 1979 and continued it in pilot service. In 1986, Sumstad converted the vessel to a fisheries tender, buying and freezing fish onboard for shipment to market. Sumstad sold the *Husky II* in 2001. After passing through the hands of a couple of owners, the vessel was abandoned at Seldovia, Alaska. Cleaned of hazardous materials in a project headed by the U.S. Coast Guard, the deteriorating vessel was broken up at Homer in 2010. The *Husky II* represents the widespread commercial reuse of surplus navy landing craft and small boats in the decades after World War II, when vessels built for government use became essential equipment in the lives of fishermen, tour operators, sportsmen, and coastal mariners across the country.

Author: Michael R. Harrison, 2011

Project Information: The *Husky II* Recording Project was sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Anchorage Incident Management Division, under the direction of Terry Hasenauer. The project was assisted by Tim Dillon, Seldovia City Manager, and Mark Janes, Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC. HAER project leader Todd A. Croteau prepared the large-format photographs and, with

Ryan Pierce, created drawings based on historic plans preserved at the National Archives and Records Administration. Historian Michael Harrison wrote the historical report.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Dates of construction: *LCI(L) 653* was laid down June 14, 1944, launched July 14, 1944, and delivered to the navy and commissioned July 21, 1944.³

2. Designer: The design and contract plans for the U.S. Navy's large infantry landing craft were developed by the department's own Bureau of Ships in Washington, D.C. The working plans for construction were the responsibility of the Engineering Division of George Lawley & Son Corporation, Boston, a prominent Massachusetts boat and yacht builder.⁴

3. Builder: *LCI(L) 653* was built by New Jersey Shipbuilding Corporation in Barber, New Jersey, one of ten U.S. yards to build large infantry landing craft (LCI(L)s) during World War II. The company was incorporated in 1942 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Barber Asphalt Corporation. When the war cut off imported crude-oil supplies, idling the Barber Asphalt plant on Arthur Kill at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, the managers of the asphalt company set up the shipbuilding corporation specifically to lease the Perth Amboy plant and convert it into a shipyard for LCI(L)s. The corporation promptly demolished the asphalt plant, and within about six months from the start of work built both the shipyard and delivered the first landing craft to the navy.⁵

New Jersey Shipbuilding prefabricated landing-craft hull and deck house sections in a factory 14 miles from the yard and brought them to the ways by railroad. The sections were then assembled together in sequence to create the vessel. As construction progressed, each landing craft was hauled along the ways from one assembly station to another.

"[C]onstruction progresses until the finished craft is pulled onto a floating platform for launching," the *New York Times* reported. "This platform is then submerged and the craft floats." This assembly-line-like process, adopted by many wartime American amphibious craft and boat builders, allowed many vessels to be built simultaneously. New York Shipbuilding was delivering ten hulls per month by February 1943.⁶

³ "Avocet (II)," in *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a14/avocet-ii.htm>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011.

⁴ *Detail and Special Specifications for Building Landing Craft Infantry (Large) LCI(L) 351-542* (U.S. Navy, Bureau of Ships, [1943]), 10. A detailed discussion of the design history of the LCIs appears in Norman Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft: An Illustrated Design History* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 138-148.

⁵ "New yard at Perth Amboy will build secret type of cargo vessel for navy," *New York Times*, June 21, 1942, 18; "Barber Asphalt plans major role in shipbuilding," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 30, 1942, 7; "Asphalt concern to be shipbuilder," *New York Times*, Oct. 22, 1942, 31; "Heavy landing craft in mass production," *New York Times*, Apr. 9, 1944, 34; J. D. Ladd, *Assault from the Sea 1939-45: The Craft, the Landings, the Men* (Newton Abbot, England: David & Charles, 1976), 107-109.

⁶ Quote from "Heavy landing craft in mass production," *New York Times*, Apr. 9, 1944, 34; Ladd, *Assault from the Sea*, 107-109.

Eventually managed by Todd Shipyards Corporation, New Jersey Shipbuilding employed about 2,500 workers and produced 375 LCI(L)s during the war. The first eighty craft its workers completed, *LCI(L) 239* to *LCI(L) 318*, were sent to the British Royal Navy in late 1942 and early 1943. The balance entered U.S. Navy service in 1943 and 1944. *LCI(L) 653* formed part of contract no. 1261, comprising hulls 641 to 657, which were delivered to the government in July and August 1944. The yard was dismantled after the war.⁷

4. Original plans: *LCI(L) 653* was an *LCI(L) 351*-class large infantry landing craft, a type of amphibious assault vessel developed by the U.S. Navy during World War II. According to the navy's specifications, LCI(L)s were "intended for landing fully equipped assault troops, after a period of embarkation.

The vessel is required to be able to beach with a draft forward not in excess of 30 inches and a beach slope as low as 1 in 75. Orderly but rapid disembarkation is a primary requirement. After either a beach landing or loading, the vessel will be required to retract from the beach under its own power. The vessel is to be of such arrangement that it can be adapted to the transporting of packaged cargo which is susceptible of manhandling. No cargo-handling equipment is required. The craft is to be suitable for ocean passage under her own power and on her own bottom."⁸

The first 302 LCI(L)s built for the government had relatively narrow deck houses and square pilot houses. Troops disembarked single-file over two exposed landing gangways which were run out on each side of the bow. The first LCI(L)s had only benches to accommodate the troops they carried, but this quickly proved impractical and bunks were fitted in the troop compartments. Experience in service also led to the development of significant design changes, which first appeared in *LCI(L) 351*, delivered in May 1943. In *LCI(L) 351* and subsequent craft, the deck house was carried the full width of the hull to provide enlarged crew accommodations and to better protect the troop-compartment hatches, which were also enlarged to accommodate stretchers. A new cylindrical pilot house was designed, and many improvements were made to the ventilation and lighting arrangements as well as to water and provisions stowage. The two landing gangways were initially retained in this redesign, although lengthened and rigged for operation using the forward anchor winch. Following a successful prototyping trial on *LCI(L) 402*, delivered in January 1944, most hulls built after June 1, 1944, had single double-file centerline ramps that deployed through a pair of side-opening bow doors, a design that provided better protection to disembarking troops. The areas formerly used to stow the side gangways became protected well-deck space and

⁷ New Jersey Shipbuilding built LCIs 239 to 318, 423 to 657, 782 to 821, and 866 to 884. Planned numbers 885 to 901, 911 to 928, and 1110 to 1139 were cancelled in 1944. Tim Colton, "New Jersey Shipbuilding, Barber, NJ," *Shipbuilding History*, <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/history/shipyards/4emergencysmall/newjersey.htm>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011.

⁸ *Detail and Special Specifications for Building Landing Craft Infantry (Large) LCI(L) 351-542, 2.*

the headroom in the forecastle was increased to allow adequate room to work the new ramp. *LCI(L) 653* was built with all of these late design improvements.⁹

LCI(L) 653 was 159' long overall and displaced 387 long tons when fully loaded. It was built of welded steel throughout, with 15-lb high-tensile steel in the pilot house and conning tower and 10-lb high-tensile steel in the sides and bulwarks of the forward third of the craft as protection against small arms fire.¹⁰ Additional armoring was provided to the gun tubs, conning tower, and pilot house sides through the installation of 2" of plastic splinter protection (i.e., crushed granite pebbles embedded in bitumen). The craft was originally armed with five 20mm guns and powered by eight six-cylinder General Motors Series 71 diesel truck engines, four for each of the two propeller shafts. Variable-pitch propellers were fitted to allow the craft to proceed astern at full speed without the need for additional gearing between the engines and the shafts. The vessel had a maximum speed of 16 knots. (Space was reserved on the forward well deck to stow two replacement engines, as they were commonly run to destruction.) The vessel was designed to carry 110 tons of diesel fuel, 5 tons of lube oil, and 37 tons of water, giving it an operational range of 8,000 miles at 12 knots. It could carry 75 tons of cargo in ocean-going condition when no troops were aboard. Troop landing was achieved by beaching the vessel and deploying a single ramp through the bow. A stern anchor and winch were fitted to allow the crew to kedge the craft off the beach.¹¹

According to the navy's wartime guide to landing craft, the *LCI(L) 351*-class was assigned a complement of four officers and twenty-four sailors and could accommodate a troop load of nine officers and 196 enlisted infantrymen, plus 32 tons of cargo. All officers were accommodated in three cabins in the deck house on the main deck, while the vessel's crew and all troops bunked in five compartments in the hold, four for troops and one for sailors. Sufficient galley and mess space was provided for the vessel's complement only, as troops, carrying their own rations, were only expected to be aboard overnight or for a few days.¹²

The design of the *LCI(L)*s was purposely kept simple, with few complex curves in either hull or superstructure, "to facilitate rapid construction." As the navy informed its contractors,

It is the intention that every ounce of effectiveness which can be gained from the material going into the craft shall be developed, but no effort is required for the development of appearance or refinements which do not contribute to

⁹ Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 145–48. According to Friedman, the craft with center gangways were *LCIs* 402, 641–657, 691–716, 762–780, 782–821, 866–884, 1024–1033, and 1068–1098.

¹⁰ Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 141.

¹¹ Navy Department, Division of Naval Intelligence, *Allied Landing Craft and Ships* ([Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), n.p.; Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 104.

¹² Navy Department, *Allied Landing Craft and Ships*, n.p. See also George Lawley & Son Corporation, plans for the *LCI(L) 351*-class, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md. (hereinafter, NARA), Records of the Bureau of Ships (RG 19), Plans of U.S. Navy vessels in the records of the shipbuilding division, microfilm roll 5899.

effective war service of the completed vessel. Critical materials are to be avoided. Long durability can be sacrificed to this end. Operational reliability for the immediate future cannot be sacrificed.¹³

5. Alterations and additions: No significant alterations to *LCI(L) 653* are known during World War II. After seven years in postwar layup, the navy converted the craft into a coastal minesweeper, one specifically intended to locate underwater mines but not to neutralize them. Between July and December 1953, the vessel, renamed USS *Avocet*, had a sonar dome installed below the waterline, additional electronics installed, its armament reduced to two 20mm guns, and other modifications made to suit its new role. The *Avocet* operated after conversion with a crew of four officers and thirty-nine sailors.¹⁴

Owner Oddmund Sumstad made other modifications to the vessel to equip it for freight and piloting service as the *Husky II* in the early 1960s. Two color slides taken between 1964 and 1966 by Dr. Robert Fortune, a U.S. Public Health Service physician working in Bethel, Alaska, show the *Husky II* as a pilot boat. The vessel's hull and superstructure were painted white, and the words "Kuskokwim Pilot Vessel" were painted in black letters on the sides of the deck house. A small cabin was added abaft the pilot house. The tall, long bulwarks that originally shielded the open forward well deck, where troops would muster before disembarking through the forecastle during landings, were cut away to allow easier loading and unloading of cargo onto the open deck. A large hatch into the former no. 2 troop compartment was probably cut through the deck at this time. The gun tubs were removed, the forward anchor winch moved from the well deck to the forecastle top, and a kingpost and boom installed immediately abaft the forecastle for cargo handling. The kingpost was later reinforced by two forward running rigid supports.¹⁵

Ronald Sumstad, the next owner, replaced the boat's eight original 6-71 General Motors diesel engines in 1979 or 1980 with two V1671 Detroit Diesel engines. A small funnel for the engine exhausts was added abaft the pilot house on the deck house top at this time. Not long afterward, Sumstad also replaced the small original pilot house with a larger, custom-built house.¹⁶

After the vessel became a fishing tender in 1986, a 10,000-gallon fish tank was installed aboard. The hold space formerly occupied by troop compartments nos. 1 and 2 was

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 5, 471. A variety of records relating to the *Avocet* conversion appear in Navy History and Heritage Command, Ships History Division, Washington, D.C., decommissioned ships' histories, box 60, folder: *Avocet* (MHC-16) II (hereinafter cited as NHHC).

¹⁵ Robert Fortune, photographer, slides 6407B08 and 6407B06, University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library, Archives and Special Collections, Robert Fortune Papers, 1957-99 (HMC-0455), box 14, folder 3.

¹⁶ Ronald D. Sumstad, telephone interview with the author, Nov. 18, 2011, notes filed in the field notes for this project; James Laurence Pelletier, *Mariner's Deep-Draft and Fishing Vessel Directory United States of America*, 2002 ed. (Augusta, Me.: Marine Techniques Publishing, 2002), 256-57.

converted into a refrigerated hold through the installation of compressor-and-fan units and the application of spray-on insulation to the frames, bulkheads, and main-deck beams.¹⁷

At an unknown date, a short extension was built aft from the forecastle deck and new raised bulwarks were added to shelter the well deck. A lightweight metal platform deck was also added above the main deck aft to stow boats and other equipment. The stern winch was also replaced.

B. Historical Context

LCIs in World War II

Amphibious combat operations played a larger role in World War II than they had in any previous war. The U.S. Navy and the British Royal Navy, in particular, developed many types of boats and ships specifically for landing personnel, vehicles, tanks, and other equipment in littoral combat zones. The large infantry landing craft, known by its designation LCI(L) (or simply as an LCI or “Elsie Item”), was one of these newly developed craft. In the navy’s description, the LCI(L) was “an ocean-going infantry carrier designed for direct unloading on the beach. Although living space, galley, and toilet are provided for accommodation of troops, the space is limited to a practical operational time of 48 hours.”¹⁸

British and American joint military planning in late 1941 and 1942 revealed that vast numbers of landing craft would be needed to mount amphibious campaigns in Europe and the Pacific, and during 1942 design and production of craft to fill this need were given highest priority in war production planning. British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten is usually credited with proposing the construction of a seagoing boat large enough to carry a full infantry company – 200 men – across the English Channel for an invasion of France. Britain could not spare the manpower, materials, and facilities to build such a craft, so the Admiralty prompted the U.S. Navy’s Bureau of Ships to design and build the desired infantry landing craft in the United States. The process from design to first deliveries took a remarkably short five months. The Bureau of Ships designed the LCI(L) during May 1942 and awarded the first contracts for construction at the beginning of June to the boat- and yacht-building firm of George Lawley & Son Corporation, Boston, and the purpose-built yard of New Jersey Shipbuilding at Barber, Perth Amboy, New Jersey. New Jersey Shipbuilding laid down *LCI(L) 1* on July 27, 1942, and delivered it to the navy October 7. Lawley laid down *LCI(L) 209*, the first hull in its order, on August 1 and delivered it on September 30. By war’s end, ten yards across the United States had built over 900 of these craft. Only twenty were lost during the war.¹⁹

¹⁷ Sumstad interview; Pelletier, *Mariner’s Deep-Draft and Fishing Vessel Directory*, 256–57.

¹⁸ *Allied Landing Craft and Ships*, n.p.

¹⁹ A detailed discussion of the design history of the LCIs appears in Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 138–148. The construction dates for *LCI(L) 1* and *LCI(L) 209* are taken from pp. 581 and 587. See also Ladd, *Assault from the Sea*, 107; John A. Lorelli, *To Foreign Shores: U.S. Amphibious Operations in World War II* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 36–37; Paul H. Silverstone, *The Navy of World War II, 1922–1947* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 235.

The first LCI(L)s sailed with British crews in mid November 1942 for the Mediterranean. The U.S. Navy began deploying the craft to various combat theaters in early 1943 with actual use in combat landings beginning in the early summer of that year in the South Pacific, the Aleutian Islands, and the Mediterranean (the invasion of Sicily). These craft then figured in all significant landings in the European and Pacific theaters through the end of the war.²⁰

Like many other amphibious craft built during the war, the LCI(L)s, although developed for a specific task, were frequently modified to fill other roles. About a third of the LCIs became flotilla flagships, gunships, mortar ships, or rocket ships (designated LCI(FF), LCI(G), LCI(M), and LCI(R) respectively). Many were modified into more than one of these alternative configurations as the navy's tactical needs changed. It should also be noted that the navy built 130 Mark 3 large support landing craft (LCS(L)s) during the war using the hull lines developed for the LCIs.²¹

The LCI(L)s and their variations were the American navy's smallest oceangoing landing craft, meaning that they could deliver themselves to the theater of battle without needing to be transported aboard larger ships. Built to a relatively simple design with readily available components in order to meet very short delivery timelines, they were completely utilitarian. War correspondent Frank D. Morris, writing in *Collier's*, called them "handsome as a garbage scow" and related that their crews "lovingly" called them "the Floating Bedpan[s]." Morris also described how "practically all the Elsie skippers are reserve officers. Their training is brief, intensive. A few weeks of indoctrination school, a midshipman's cruise with an experienced LCI skipper, and they get a command of their own." Due to the need for experienced navy officers elsewhere, many LCIs were commanded by Coast Guard officers.²²

Repurposing Landing Craft after the War

The navy purchased amphibious craft of all types by the thousands during the war, but had no need for most of them once the war ended. Once decommissioned, most surplus craft were never used again; whether sold soon after the war ended or placed in reserve, they

Sources conflict on the total number of LCIs constructed. U.S. shipyard historian Tom Colton's detailed online lists of wartime shipyard production match lists given in Friedman and are probably correct and complete. They list 1,139 LCIs ordered, 218 cancelled, and 921 delivered. Ladd, however, gives a total of 1,250 (913 LCI(L)s plus 337 LCI(FF)s, (G)s, (M)s, and (R)s.) An Office of Naval Intelligence list dated Nov. 15, 1945, reproduced in Morison, gives a total of 1,059 (753 LCI(L)s plus 306 others). Colton, "Landing Craft, Infantry (Large) - LCI(L)," *Shipbuilding History*, <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/history/smallships/lcil.htm>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011; Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 581ff; Ladd, *Assault from the Sea*, 116; Office of Naval Intelligence, Statistical Section, "The United States Fleet," Nov. 15, 1945, in Samuel Loring Morison, ed., *United States Naval Vessels* (Atglen, Penn.: Schiffer Military Press, 1996), n.p.

²⁰ Friedman, *U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft*, 143-45.

²¹ Colton lists 326 LCIs converted to non-troop-carrying configurations in "Landing Craft, Infantry (Large) - LCI(L)," *Shipbuilding History*; Ladd, *Assault from the Sea*, 116.

²² Frank D. Morris, "Bazooka Boats," *Collier's*, Nov. 11, 1944, 21.

were cut up for scrap (or sunk as targets) before serving any other duty. A significant number, however, were sold or transferred to foreign governments. Among LCIs alone, several dozen passed to France, the USSR, Greece, Israel, the Netherlands, the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia), China, India, Thailand, the Philippines, Argentina, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. By and large, foreign navies employed these vessels as coastal and river gunboats, although some made use of them as landing craft.²³

It is not clear how many LCIs eventually became American or foreign private commercial watercraft, but at least fourteen American examples are known, besides the *Husky II*. Eight LCIs were converted into passenger-carrying excursion boats. These included *LCI(L) 1085*, which ran from 1950 to 1989 as the *Ticonderoga* on Lake George, New York; *LCI(L) 330*, which became the Hyannis–Nantucket ferry *Siasconset*; and six LCIs that became tour boats for the Circle Line in New York City.²⁴ *LCI(R) 74* and *LCI(L) 1061* became (for separate owners) the towboats *Beulah H. Russell* and *Bannock* on the Columbia River, and *LCI(L) 713* was purchased for this use, too, although it ran only briefly before becoming a service platform for its owner's other boats. *LCI(L) 1091* was a salmon cannery tender in Alaska from 1961 to 1985, then a tuna fishing boat from 1995 to 2003. *LCI(M) 648* became a floating casino and then a shrimp processor on the Gulf Coast. *LCI(G) 538* went to the private Admiral Farragut Academy. The operational histories of other LCIs reveal that, although the *Husky II*'s career was exceptionally long, the vessel's peacetime reuse was not unique.²⁵

The scrapping of the *Husky II* in mid 2010 left only six LCIs afloat, as far as is known.²⁶ Since then, two other LCIs have been sunk to form artificial reefs for recreational diving in Thailand.²⁷ Of the four known to remain, two are Circle Line tour boats operating in New York City, *Circle Line X* and *Circle Line VIII*, the latter of which is now out of survey and laid up. The remaining two survive as museum vessels: *LCI(L) 713*, preserved by the

²³ Colton, "Landing Craft, Infantry (Large) - LCI(L)," *Shipbuilding History*

²⁴ The six LCIs purchased by the Circle Line were *LCI(L) 179* (*Circle Line VIII*), *191* (*VII*), *390* (*IV*), *646* (*VI*), *758* (*X*), and *766* (*IX*). The Circle Line also converted numerous surplus Coast Guard cutters for sightseeing use after World War II. Brian J. Cudahy, *Around Manhattan Island and Other Maritime Tales of New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 226.

²⁵ Repurposed LCIs identified through Colton, "Landing Craft, Infantry (Large) - LCI(L)," *Shipbuilding History*.

²⁶ At least three LCI hulls lie among the scrapyard wrecks in the Arthur Kill in New York Harbor. It is possible other hulls survive elsewhere in the world.

²⁷ The U.S. government transferred *LCI(M) 670* to the Thai Navy after the war, and it served for many years as the gunboat HTMS *Prab* before being sunk off Ngam Noi Island, Thailand, in May 2011. Similarly, *LCI(M) 739* became HTMS *Sattakut* and was sent to the bottom off the island of Koh Tao in June 2011. "HTMS Prab sunk to make new reef," *Bangkok Post*, May 20, 2011, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/238015/htms-prab-downs-to-seabed>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011; Arthur Jaseau, "Thai Navy Scuttles Former LCIs," *Elsie Item* 76 (July 2011):22, <http://www.usslci.com/html/documents/ELSIITEMISSUE76.pdf>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011.

The former HTMS *Nakha* (ex *LCS(L) 102*), the hull of which is based on the lines of an LCI, passed from the Thai Navy to private U.S. owners in 2007 and is currently undergoing restoration in California.

Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum in Portland, Oregon, and *LCI(L) 1091*, preserved at Eureka, California.²⁸

C. Operational History

Landing Craft

The navy commissioned USS *LCI(L) 653* on July 21, 1944, at New York City. The vessel was assigned to the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific Ocean and sailed from New York under the command of Lt. (jg) Thomas E. Hamilton on July 27. Hamilton and his crew sailed the landing craft via Hampton Roads, Key West, the Panama Canal, Bora Bora in the Society Islands, and Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides to the U.S. base at Seeadler Harbor on Manus Island (now part of Papua New Guinea), where it arrived in late September.²⁹

The vessel was initially assigned to *LCI(L)* Flotilla 27, which consisted of just a single group of nine *LCI(L)*s, Group 79. Flotilla 27 was dissolved in December 1944 and Group 79 assigned to Flotilla 24, which comprised forty-five *LCI(L)*s in its expanded form. *LCI(L) 653* was stationed at Hollandia on New Guinea, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's headquarters, during December 1944 and January 1945. At the end of the January, the vessel carried troops and supplies to Leyte in the Philippines and began regular transport duties in the Leyte area.³⁰

In March 1945, *LCI(L) 653* made its first combat landing as part of Operation Victor Four, the invasion of the Zamboanga Peninsula on the Philippine island of Mindanao. The vessel, still part of Group 79, carried 153 soldiers and eight Army officers to Mindanao. These men were members of Company B, 163rd Infantry Regiment (Montana National Guard).

The action report for Group 79 describes how *LCI(L) 653* and its crew participated in the landing:

[On] 1 March 1945, U.S.S. *LCI(L)*'s 654(GF), 653, 709, 710, 711, 713, and 779, of *LCI(L)* Group SEVENTY-NINE, departed from SAN PEDRO BAY, LEYTE, P. I. to MINDORO via SAN JAUNICO STRAITS to stage for future operations [Twenty other ships joined the convoy, including eleven additional *LCI(L)*s.] The convoy, after clearing SAN JAUNICO STRAITS,

²⁸ The wartime service in the Philippines of the *LCI(L) 713* closely parallels that of *LCI(L) 653*; "LCI 713," Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, <http://www.amphibiousforces.org/lci713page/lci713page.html>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011. "USS *LCI(L)-1091*," Historic Naval Ships, <http://www.hnsa.org/ships/lci1091.htm>, accessed Nov. 9, 2011.

²⁹ Copies of notecards and lists partly documenting *LCI(L) 653*'s movements from commissioning in 1944 to decommissioning in 1946 appear in NHHHC. Reports documenting the craft's fit out and delivery to the navy appear in NARA, Records of the Bureau of Ships (RG 19), General Correspondence 1940-45, box 467, folder: *LCI(L) 653*.

³⁰ The war service of *LCI(L) 653* is summarized from Flotilla 24 war diaries, Dec. 1944-Nov. 1945, NARA, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (RG 38), box 1035. This information was researched and generously provided by David S. McKay of the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, Portland, Oreg.

proceeded at a speed of eleven (11) knots, and arrived at MANGARIN BAY, MINDORO, P. I. . . . No troops were transported on LCI(L)'s of group SEVENTY-NINE during this movement and the voyage was made without incident. . . .

On 5 March 1945 . . . LCI(L) 653, under the administrative command of Commander, LCI(L) Group SEVENTY-NINE, was placed under the tactical and operational command of Commander, LCI(L) Group SEVENTY-ONE for the duration of the operation, [and] proceeded as one of the LCI(L)'s [in] Wave Seven (7), YELLOW BEACH TWO. . . .

On 6 March 1945 . . . LCI(L) 653 . . . embarked troops together with other ships of Wave Seven (7), YELLOW BEACH TWO, and returned to MANGARIN BAY anchorage to await final instructions for getting underway. . . . [Although the report does not specify, *LCI(L) 653* probably embarked troops via beaching at Bubug Point on Mindoro, as other craft in the group are reported to have done.]

[On] 8 March 1945 . . . LCI(L) 653 sortied together with other LCI(L)'s under tactical and operational command of Commander, LCI(L) Group SEVENTY-ONE, in accordance with plan. . . .

On 10 March 1945 LCI(L) 653 . . . proceeded to berth C22 and lay to to beach in Wave Seven (7), YELLOW BEACH TWO, in accordance with landing schedule. . . .

The U.S.S. LCI(L) 653, of which Commander, LCI(L) Group SEVENTY-NINE had administrative command, and of which Commander LCI(L) Group SEVENTY-ONE had tactical and operational command, participated as the left flank ship, Wave Seven (7), YELLOW BEACH TWO. Subject vessel transported 153 men and eight (8) officers of Company "B", 163rd Infantry, of the 41st Division, EIGHTH Army. LCI(L) 653 proceeded with other LCI's of the Seventh Wave, upon order from the control station, to YELLOW BEACH TWO, at 1001 (I). A wet beach landing was encountered, necessitating wading upon the part of the troops, fifty feet from the dry beachhead, the depth of the water at the end of the bow being four and a half feet (4 1/2'). After the first eleven (11) men had disembarked, it was determined to use LCVP's [landing craft, vehicle, personnel] in disembarking the remainder of the troops aboard. Disembarkation of troops took a total of sixteen (16) minutes by this method. Mortar fire was encountered going into the beachhead, but it was ineffective and no damage to personnel or ship resulted. At 1017 (I), the LCI(L) 653 retracted from the beach and proceeded to the anchorage area EASY at flank speed and anchored. . . .

LCI(L) 653 had no battle damage to own or enemy forces. . . .³¹

The report noted that the commander of Group 79, Lt. Comdr. M. D. Coppersmith, had 50' and 75' lengths of 3/4" line secured to the ends of his vessels' landing ramps. Aboard ships that encountered wet landings, these lines were led out and held taut by the first two troops to disembark, and following troops used them as guides to maintain their balance and to propel themselves through the high water.

This landing was the first combat landing for six other LCI(L)s in the group besides *LCI(L) 653*. "The performance of each vessel was commendable and particularly noteworthy in view of the efficient and courageous manner of carrying on despite their being endangered from shell and mortar fired by the enemy. The ships were handled carefully and well," Lieutenant Commander Coppersmith concluded.³²

LCI(L) 653 was one of twelve LCI(L)s ordered to remain near Zamboanga after the operation, and from March 16–19, 1945, it carried 161 officers and men of the 163rd Infantry to Zamboanga from Palawan.³³

The craft's next landing came only a few weeks later, when it was one of five LCIs assigned to carry members of the 41st Infantry Division to Sanga Sanga during an operation to set up air-warning and radar facilities. It returned to Leyte in the middle of April and carried 320 troops and 8 tons of supplies on two trips out from Leyte during the rest of the month.³⁴

From May to November 1945, *LCI(L) 653*, based at Leyte, provided inter-island transport to a variety of places in the southern Philippines for military personnel and possibly also for civilians whose transport routes had been disrupted by the war. A few times the vessel was assigned to what records refer to as "special missions" and "special duty," but nothing is known about these assignments.³⁵

On September 3, 1945, the vessel was assigned to Task Group 93, the operating force attached to the administrative command responsible for safeguarding shipping in the Philippine Sea, the so-called Philippines Sea Frontier. Despite this administrative change, *LCI(L) 653* continued general transport duties as before.³⁶

In May 1945, the Bureau of Ships warned that the mechanism used to vary the pitch of the propellers installed on *LCI(L) 653* and other craft presented a possible hazard "because occasionally a faulty mechanism will indicate full astern pitch while propeller blades are unchangeably set at full ahead." Sometime in the fall of 1945, probably in early October, one

³¹ Lt. Comdr. M. D. Coppersmith, Action Report for LCI(L) Group 79, Mar. 13, 1945, filed within the Action Report for Task Group 78.1.13, NARA, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (RG 38), box 271.

³² Ibid.

³³ Flotilla 24 war diaries.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

of the *LCI(L) 653*'s propellers jammed in the ahead position without the engine room crew knowing it was stuck. This caused the craft to spin when a full-astern order was given, with the result that it failed to avoid a sunken ship. Nothing more is known of this incident or of any damage it may have caused.³⁷

The vessel remained under the command of Task Group 93 after the dissolution of Flotilla 24 in November 1945 and continued service in the Philippines into January 1946. Ordered to return to the United States, the crew took the vessel first to Guam, arriving in early February, and then to Pearl Harbor. The ship arrived in San Francisco at the end of March 1946, then sailed to Astoria, Oregon, at the beginning of April, where it was decommissioned and placed in reserve in the Columbia River on June 6, 1946.³⁸

For its service in the Mindanao Island landings, *LCI(L) 653* was awarded one battle star.³⁹

Minehunter

Having taken part in only two combat landings during the war, *LCI(L) 653* was likely in relatively good condition when it returned to the United States after the end of the war. While the navy quickly sold off the great majority of the more than 900 LCIs it owned at war's end, *LCI(L) 653* was one of a few dozen it retained in reserve. On February 28, 1949, the navy reclassified its remaining LCI(L)s as LSILs, and the *LCI(L) 653* briefly became *LSIL-653*, although it never served in commission under this designation.⁴⁰

In 1952–53, the navy converted twenty-five LCI(L)s to coastal underwater-locator minesweepers. *LSIL-653* was renamed *USS Avocet* and reclassified AMCU-16 on March 7, 1952. It and nine sister vessels were converted for minesweeping at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard between July and December 1953. After alteration the ship had designed accommodation for five officers and thirty-six enlisted crew, but operated with four officers and thirty-nine sailors. *Avocet* was recommissioned under the command of Lt. James E. McMullen on December 9, 1953.⁴¹

The *Avocet*'s service as a minesweeper lasted fifteen months. The vessel was homeported at San Diego and used primarily to train sonar students and carry out mine experiments for the Naval Electronics Laboratory. In the words of one shipboard wag, "Half way through May [1954] she was in Long Beach swarming with eager reservists. It was port the larboard and all ahead abaft, as the weekend warriors enjoyed her hospitality. After being straightened out a bit, she sailed south to her pier at the Admiral Kidd Club, and the routine

³⁷ The incident of *LCI(L) 653* striking a sunken ship is alluded to, but not explained, in two brief memos both titled "Admin. Rpt. - Striking of a Sunken Ship by the USS LCI(L)653," April 4 and May [?] 1946, in NARA, Records of the Bureau of Ships (RG 19), Confidential Central Correspondence 1946, box 991, folder: LCI(L) 653.

³⁸ NHHC.

³⁹ "Avocet (II)," in *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*,

⁴⁰ NHHC.

⁴¹ Only fifteen of the twenty-five minesweeper-converted LCIs were actually recommissioned. An additional eight planned conversions were cancelled. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 5, 470–71; *Avocet* decommissioning booklet, filed in NHHC.

of sonar training.” In July, the vessel assisted the recovery of a lost mine outside Port Heuneme; on another occasion the vessel located the wreck site of a downed Cutlass jet. In December, the same ship’s historian relates, “the Bureau [of Ships] decided to see what a depth charge would do to her hull. She put her nose in the air and didn’t let it bother her a bit.” The craft was reclassified as coastal minehunter MHC-16 on February 7, 1955, but arrived in San Francisco on the 23rd of that month and was prepared for inactivation at Moore Dry Dock Company in Oakland. The *Avocet* was decommissioned at Stockton, California, May 20, 1955, approved for disposal December 21, 1959, and struck from the navy list on January 1, 1960.⁴²

Pilot boat

Franco Zappone Enterprises of Spokane, Washington, bought the former *Avocet* from the navy in 1960 or 1961 and registered the vessel in Seattle as the *Keystone*. It is not known how or if Zappone operated it.⁴³ In 1962, the craft passed into the ownership of Oddmund M. “Oly” Sumstad, a Seattle mariner whose family had emigrated from Norway to Washington state in the early 1930s. Sumstad renamed the vessel *Husky II*.⁴⁴

Sumstad had previously fished in the Bering Sea aboard a 55' boat he owned called *Husky*. On October 13, 1961, the *Husky* ran aground in a storm and sank near the northwest end of Amak Island, Alaska. All aboard survived, and Sumstad used the insurance money from the accident to buy the former *Avocet*. According to his nephew Ronald D. Sumstad, who began working on the *Husky II* with his uncle in 1963, Sumstad paid \$40,000 for the boat and acquired it from Jacobson Brothers, a Seattle surplus dealer.⁴⁵

Oddmund Sumstad employed the *Husky II* out of Bethel, Alaska, as a pilot boat along the Kuskokwim River. He had a contract with the Coast Guard to lead vessels into port and out to sea through the river’s meandering and shifting channel with shoals, as well as to set and retrieve buoys. The traffic he escorted included many freight and fuel barges towed by tugs, but freighters, freezer ships, and research vessels also called in the river. In addition to pilot work, Sumstad used the *Husky II* at the beginning of each shipping season to bring lumber, soda pop, and other supplies up from Seattle to sell to the communities dotting the river.⁴⁶

⁴² Quotes from *Avocet* decommissioning booklet, NHHC; “*Avocet*,” in *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*.

⁴³ *Record of the American Bureau of Shipping*, 1962, 715.

⁴⁴ The *Keystone* ex *Avocet* appears in the *Record of the American Bureau of Shipping* for the first time in 1962 (p. 715); it appears as the *Husky II* in every subsequent edition from 1963 through 1985.

⁴⁵ The 50-gross-ton *Husky*, ex *Defender*, had been built in Los Angeles in 1940. U.S. Treasury Department, Bureau of Customs, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1959, 245; *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1962, 903; D. Septer and J. W. Schwab, *Rainstorm and Flood Damage: Northwest British Columbia, 1891–1991*, Land Management Handbook 31 (Victoria, B.C.: British Columbia Ministry of Forests, 1995), 88; Sumstad interview.

⁴⁶ Sumstad interview; Mary Lenz, “Transportation and Transition in the Early 20th Century,” in *Alaska Geographic* 15, no. 4 (1988): 64–68; Naomi Klouda, “*Husky II* undergoes Coast Guard clean up,” *Homer Tribune*, Feb. 25, 2009, <http://homertribune.com/2009/02/husky-ii-undergoes-coast-guard-clean-up/>, accessed Nov. 10, 2011.

"It's 1:30 p.m. in the cluttered skipper's cabin of the pilot boat *Husky II*," a reporter wrote in 1975, "and it's clear both the pilot and his client have a problem. 'The steering is out, the automatic pilot is out, everything is out,' the pilot shouts, dramatically waving his grease-smearred arms." The pilot in question was probably Sumstad, without whom the freight shipments of the Foss Alaska Line and Northland Marine Lines, the two common carriers then providing barge service to western Alaska, could not come up the river. The reporter described the cargo Sumstad's work allowed to get through as "things like building supplies for Charlie Guinn's lumber store; redwood planking for Bethel's sidewalks; insulated sewer pipe for the Public Health Service hospital; beer for Nome's Bering Straits saloon [Bethel itself being a dry town]; and assorted boats, cars, trucks and groceries for places with names like Unalakleet, Tuluksak, Napakiak, Eek, Crooked Creek, Oscarville and Tooksook Bay."⁴⁷

Sumstad operated the *Husky II* seasonally until his death in January 1978. His nephew Ronald then bought the boat from the bank and continued the pilot operation in Alaska between May and October each year. The elder Sumstad had rebuilt the vessel's original but difficult General Motors 6-71 quad diesels at the end of each season. Ronald called them the "engineer's nightmare," and, in 1979 or 1980, replaced them with two more modern V1671 Detroit Diesel engines. Not long afterward he also replaced the original cylindrical pilot house with a more spacious and comfortable one, built to order by a place near the Ballard Locks in Seattle. The new house provided better sight lines for operating the vessel.⁴⁸

Ron Sumstad wintered the boat at the Shell Oil Dock on Lake Union in Seattle. The winter months were spent doing maintenance, buying lumber, and "looking through the ads for bargains to buy and take up to Alaska." Every two years he had the boat hauled out at the Foss Shipyard for hull maintenance.⁴⁹

Fish processing tender

In 1986, Sumstad got a contract from Whitney Foods in Anchorage to buy and pack fish. He converted the *Husky II* into a fisheries tender by installing a fish tank and ice machines aboard and converting the forward hold to refrigeration. He bought fish directly from fishermen (herring roe on kelp early in the season, Kuskokwim River salmon late) and froze and packed it on board. While Sumstad worked largely around Togiak Bay, he brought the frozen fish to Bethel to be flown on chartered 737s to Anchorage. Sumstad recalled the *Husky II* being one of many competing processing vessels working in Alaska at the time.⁵⁰

Sumstad continued piloting with a different, smaller boat, the *Cheetah*. He stopped carrying freight from Seattle on *Husky II* when he got the Whitney Foods contract, as the boat was filled with fish totes at the start of every season. He stopped fishing in 2001 when the

⁴⁷ A. Richard Immel, "Getting the lumber and beer delivered is Roy Smith's job," *Wall Street Journal*, July 28, 1975, 1, 7.

⁴⁸ Sumstad interview.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

“fishing went to pot,” and sold the *Husky II* to a man named Denis Douglas, who intended to use it to run his mussel farm in Jakalof Bay near Seldovia.⁵¹

Derelict

Douglas kept the *Husky II* in Homer for a time, then moved it to Jakalof Bay. In 2003 he sold it to Larry Poffenroth, who had it moved to Seldovia. Poffenroth bought the boat as an investment, with the idea of moving it to Seward and opening it as a bed and breakfast. Some preliminary work appears to have been done aboard to overhaul it for this purpose, but nothing was completed, and, in fact, much was ripped apart. Eventually the boat was simply left to deteriorate in Seldovia, where it became an illegal dumping site for used oils, bilge slops, and other hazardous materials.⁵²

When the boat developed a list in 2007 due to snow loading on deck, the Coast Guard, called by a local fisherman, stepped in and worked with the owner to stabilize it. The vessel was by now both unsightly and, should it sink at its dock, a potential environmental hazard. When a worse list developed the next year, Seldovia city manager Tim Dillon got the Coast Guard to survey the vessel and take steps to deal with it. The survey revealed about 38,800 gallons of diesel fuel and hydraulic and lubricating oils on board, plus improperly stowed steel and about 1,000 gallons of illegally deposited liquid wastes. The Coast Guard requested Poffenroth immediately place containment booms around the vessel and develop and implement a remediation plan for the hazardous materials. When he did not put up booms, the Coast Guard hired the Seldovia Oil Spill Response Team to do so. Poffenroth then submitted a clean-up plan in January 2009 that the Coast Guard deemed “vague and incomplete.” As a result, the Coast Guard, working closely with the city, declared the vessel a federal clean-up site and contracted Alaska Chadux Corporation to remove the fuel and other materials.⁵³

Toward the end of the clean-up, with the petroleum contaminants removed and work on the other liquids underway, a worker removing liquid from the bilges popped a piece of the hull out with a PVC pipe. This breach was patched, but the hull was found to be paper thin due to electrolysis in the harbor. It was also found to be heavily double plated, i.e., repaired with new steel plates fastened over the original plates, a practice that encourages deterioration. The clean up of heavy oil residues in the bilges was suspended in early March

⁵¹ Sumstad interview; Klouda, “Husky II undergoes Coast Guard clean up”; Lenz, “Transportation and Transition in the Early 20th Century,” 67. A photograph of the *Husky II* docked at Bethel with small fishing boats alongside appears in Lenz, 65.

⁵² Terry Hasenhauer, telephone interview with the author, Sept. 20, 2011; Tim Dillon, telephone interview with the author, Nov. 28, 2011. Notes for both interviews are filed with the field notes for this project. Klouda, “Husky II undergoes Coast Guard clean up”; McKibben Jackinsky, “Derelict ships cause problems in Seldovia, Homer harbors,” *Homer News*, Feb. 25, 2009, http://www.homernews.com/stories/022509/news_1_004.shtml, accessed Nov. 10, 2011.

⁵³ Hasenhauer interview; Dillon interview; Tamara Blodgett, “Husky II hits the road?” *Seldovia Gazette*, Dec. 25, 2008, www.seldoviagazette.com/archive2008/081225_LocalNews.pdf, accessed Nov. 10, 2011; “Coast Guard assumes Husky II clean-up in Seldovia, Alaska,” *Coast Guard News*, Jan. 28, 2009, <http://coastguardnews.com/coast-guard-assumes-husky-ii-clean-up-in-seldovia-alaska/2009/01/28/>, accessed Nov. 10, 2011.

due to the risk of further hull damage, and plans were made to tow the vessel to Homer to be beached before further cleaning. The *Husky II* was towed across Kachemak Bay to Homer on May 12, 2010, and hauled up on the beach by the Homer Spit Marine Terminal. After the final oils and wastes were removed, the vessel was cut up for scrap by Peninsula Scrap and Salvage.⁵⁴

PART II. STRUCTURAL / DESIGN INFORMATION

A. General Description

1. Overall: The *Husky II* was built as a single-hull, welded-steel infantry landing craft. It was modified internally and externally over time for use as a freight and pilot boat and later for use as a fish processing tender. The hull, constructed with conventional transverse framing throughout, was nearly flat bottomed, with a short entrance and a hard chine at the bilge, to permit beaching. A concavity in the bottom at the stern created a recess for the propellers, which were protected by side skegs to port and starboard. The hull had a raked stem and a flat, raking transom and was fitted with two half-round steel fenders on either side. The vessel was originally subdivided into ten watertight compartments, but bulkhead modifications had effectively eliminated the vessel's watertight subdivision by the time it was scrapped.

2. Decks: The *Husky II* had three decks. The first platform deck, the only deck within the hull, contained the engine room and holds converted from the five original troop and crew berthing compartments. The main deck above this supported a raised forecastle – used for stowage, but originally designed as the troop head and the access point for the landing gangway – as well as a single midships deck house containing crew's quarters. A pilot house and small pilot's cabin sat atop the deck house. Below the platform deck, there was a double bottom that contained diesel-oil, ballast, and fresh-water tanks, plus a compartment that originally housed wartime sonar equipment.

3. Crew accommodations: In its original World War II configuration, the *Husky II's* deck house contained three officers' staterooms, galley, provision stores, crew and officer washrooms and heads, an officers' mess, combined chart and radio room, and a large open crew mess. These compartments were arranged to either side of a central passage, with the cabins, radio room, and heads built along the port side and the mess spaces, galley, and stores placed to starboard. In its final configuration, the deck house retained the central

⁵⁴ Hasenhauer interview; "Husky II update," *Seldovia Gazette*, Mar. 12, 2009, http://www.seldoviagazette.com/archive2009/090312_LocalNews.pdf, accessed Nov. 10, 2011; "Coast Guard escorts Husky II to Homer for disassembly," *Coast Guard News*, May 21, 2010, <http://coastguardnews.com/coast-guard-escorts-husky-ii-to-homer-for-disassembly/2010/05/21/>, accessed Nov. 10, 2011; Naomi Klouda, "Tearing up the barge, Husky II next," *Homer Tribune*, May 26, 2010, <http://homertribune.com/2010/05/tearing-up-the-barge-husky-ii-next/>, accessed Nov. 10, 2010; Michael Armstrong, "Not welcome: derelict vessels being scrapped," *Homer News*, Aug. 17, 2011, http://homernews.com/stories/081711/news_notwel.shtml#.TtP3OUrlc7A, accessed Nov. 10, 2011.

passage, but a new galley and open mess area were created on the port side forward. The radio room became a cabin, the captain's stateroom remained in place, and the heads were partly converted to a laundry. To starboard, the original galley and mess areas became additional cabins and offices.

4. Cargo holds and cargo handling arrangements: The vessel originally had five hold compartments, four ahead of the engine room and one aft. At some date, hatches were cut between these various spaces, and later work enlarged many of these bulkhead openings, effectively combining much of the hold space forward of the engine room into a single compartment. When the vessel was converted to a fishing tender in the mid 1980s, the hold area once occupied by the first and second troop compartments became a refrigerated hold through the installation of cooling units and the application of spray foam insulation to the frames, bulkheads, and deck beams. Cargo could be loaded into this reefer compartment through a large hatch cut through the well deck.

LCI(L) 653 was built without cargo handling equipment. Oddmund Sumstad added a kingpost and boom at the forward end of the well deck to make up for this deficiency. Much later in the vessel's career, a knuckle boom crane was added to the top of the deck house on the port side.

As a troop carrier, the vessel was equipped with a gangway that could be deployed through a pair of bow doors. Because these doors were not originally watertight, the small forepeak compartment immediately aft of them was isolated from the rest of the forecastle by a removable watertight door. When closed, this door was held in place by dogs along its top and sides, but along its bottom edge it rested on two hinged pins that slotted into the deck. When the bow doors were open, these hinges allowed the door to drop like a ramp through the bow opening. The troop gangway would then be deployed across the lowered door. The door could also be unshipped if needed. Aboard the *Husky II*, the bow doors were welded shut, and the watertight door leading to them was welded permanently into its closed position.

B. Mechanical Features

The *Husky II* was powered by two V1671 Detroit Diesel engines driving twin screws. These were installed about 1979 in place of the original eight General Motors six-cylinder Series 71 diesel engines, which had been installed in quads, four to each of the two propeller shafts. The vessel was fitted with reversible pitch propellers. It is not known if the pitch adjustment mechanism was maintained in operation after the new engines were installed.

The vessel had an electric-motor-driven steering gear and twin rudders. At the time of scrapping, the steering motor had been removed but the balance of the original steering mechanism remained in place.

To assist *LCI(L) 653* in withdrawing from the shore after beaching, the craft was equipped with a 1,000-lb Danforth stern anchor and a single drum, double-gypsy stern anchor winch. The anchor would be dropped as the vessel approached the beach; after landing troops, the winch would haul on the anchor cable to kedge the vessel free. A slightly lighter anchor and identical winch were mounted at the bow. To save room, the stern anchor was stowed

outboard of the transom in a simple tubular-steel frame, which was removed during the vessel's peacetime career. The bow anchor was stowed in a hawse pipe in the stem. The *Husky II*'s bow winch was originally installed in the well deck, but Oddmund Sumstad had it moved to the top of the forecastle. In its final configuration, the winch was operated by electric motor instead of its original gasoline engine. By the time of scrapping, the stern winch was a replacement of unknown date that sat further forward than the original, next to a double towing bitt that was also not original.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Detail and Special Specifications for Building Landing Craft Infantry (Large) LCI(L) 351-542, 20-21.*

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Appendix I:
USS LCI(L) 653, partial list of wartime ports of call, 1944–46⁵⁶

Arrive	Location	Depart
	New York.....	27 Jul 1944
28 Jul 1944.....	Little Creek	
2 Aug.....	Norfolk	
	Hampton Roads.....	20 Aug
24 Aug.....	Key West.....	26 Aug
30 Aug.....	Canal Zone.....	1 Sep
20 Sep.....	Bora Bora	
	Espiritu Santo	
	Seeadler Harbor	
2 Apr 1945.....	Sanga Sanga, P[hilippine] I[slands] Landing	
	Leyte.....	27 Apr 1945
30 Apr.....	Manila.....	4 May
8 May.....	Leyte	
	Tacloban.....	15 May
18 May.....	Manila	
	Iloilo.....	26 Jul
28 Jul.....	Tacloban	
	Iloilo.....	5 Sep
7 Sep.....	Bacolod	
	Cebu	
10 Oct.....	Agusan	
	Iloilo.....	4 Nov
[??] Nov.....	Dumaguete	
	Tacloban	
1 Feb [sic] 1946.....	Marianas	
	Samar.....	24 Jan 1946
2 Feb.....	Guam	
	Pearl.....	20 Mar
30 Mar.....	San Francisco.....	9 Apr
11 Apr.....	Astoria	

⁵⁶ This list is transcribed from wartime location cards filed in Navy History and Heritage Command, Ships History Division, decommissioned ships' histories, box 60, folder: Avocet (MHC-16) II. Comparison with other sources suggests the information on the original cards is incomplete. Note also the illogical date sequence at the beginning of 1946.