



LINCOLN HILLS VETERANS GROUP BULLETIN

August 2026

Lest We Forget

Volume 26, No. 8

President's Corner

Busy Schedule Ahead

As we move into the second half of the year, your Veterans Group has a number of informational and enjoyable events planned for our membership.

Our annual ice cream social is right around the corner. A couple more popular breakfast get-togethers are coming up, as well as our Octoberfest luncheon, holiday luncheon and guest speaker events. We still need a few volunteers to assist with some of these activities, so please let me know if you or your spouse can help us provide service to our members.

We would like to invite any member to share his or her experience in a branch of the military service. Simply contact me for some guidelines and then we'll publish your story in a future *Bulletin*.

Jon Hodson, a past president and longtime LHVG membership chairman, is the club leader we're featuring this month. Here are Jon's recollections:

I enlisted in the United States Navy in July 1967, shortly after my seventeenth birthday. After graduating from basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes Naval Training Center, I was assigned temporary duty at Barbers Point Naval Air Station on Oahu. During my six months at Barbers Point, I was assigned to the Quarterdeck as the officer of the day's messenger.

After six months at Barbers Point, I received orders to report to U.S. Naval Station San Diego to become part of a ship's company being assembled as the commissioning crew of the USS *Waddell*, which was to be commissioned at Todd Shipyards in Bremerton, Washington. I joined the Operations Division as an E-3 electronics technician.

Please turn to page 3, column 1



Next Social Event

Ice Cream Social August 13

Leatherby's Family Creamery will be the venue for our ice cream social on Thursday, August 13. Sign-in will begin at 12:30 p.m. with a starting time of 1:00 p.m.



Participants will order from the senior menu and will pay their server individually.

Advance reservations are required because seating is limited. Please RSVP by email with the number of attendees to Lois Gilbert at:

grandma-lolo@sbcglobal.net

Or use the reservation form below.

For questions, call Lois at (650) 759- 5583. The deadline for reservations is August 7.

I/we plan to attend the Ice Cream Social

Name

Phone number

Mail to:

Lois Gilbert
2023 Caravelle Court
Lincoln, CA 95648

Memorial Day 2026

More than 200 attended the ceremony at the Amphitheater on May 25. Whitney High School Air



Force JROTC cadets served as the color guard, the Twelve Bridges High School Acapella Chorus provided patriotic music and Lincoln Mayor Richard Pearl was the keynote speaker.

Lincoln Hills Veterans Group Bulletin – August 2026

Visit our website: <https://lincolnhillsvets.org/>.

Lincoln Hills Veterans Group 2026 Officers and Directors

President: Peter Gilbert 650-759-5584
Vice President: Jeff Davis 408-483-2860
Treasurer: Dave Taylor 559-281-0868
Secretary: Bauke Van Oosbree 559-307-5577
Director: Phillip Cameron 916-705-4310
Director: Dick Parry 425-240-1098
Director: Frank Furr 435-659-6218

Past Presidents: Jeff Davis, 2024-2025; Dave Taylor, 2023; Bill Lewis, 2022; Joan MacAdams, 2020-2021; Mike Schultz, 2019; Wayne Gallant, 2018; Fred Buhler, 2017; Bob Ringo*, 2016; Jack Everett, 2015; Malcolm Singer*, 2014; Roger Espiritu, 2013; Joey Chisesi*, 2012; Rich Williams, 2011; Jon Hodson, 2010; Doug Cooper, 2009; Steve Witmer, 2008; Vern Luke, 2007; Wayne Ford, 2006; Dick Schultz*, 2005; Mark Dentinger*, 2004; Dick Meyer*, 2003; Ed Foley, 2002; Mickey Haggard*, 2001
**Deceased*

Advisors and Committee Chairs

Membership: Phillip Cameron 916-705-4310
Programs: Dick Parry 425-240-1098
Vets Resource: Doug Cooper 916-408-7173
Social Events: Phillip Cameron 916-705-4310
Chaplain: Bill Lewis 916-303-0349
Flag Sales: Bauke Van Oosbree 559-307-5577
Public Relations: Steve Witmer 916-521-3587
Web Admin: Catania Group cirina@catania.us

Meetings

General membership meetings normally are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Kilaga Springs Presentation Hall, except for March, June, October and December, when social events are held.

Membership

The purpose of the Veterans Group is to bring together resident veterans who have served honorably in any uniformed service of the United States or its allies during war or peace. Dues are \$20 a year. Life membership is \$200. For further information, please contact Phillip Cameron at 916-705-4310.

Bulletin Contributions

Contributions to the monthly *Bulletin* are appreciated. Please send material for consideration to:

Steve Witmer, Editor
 1582 Summerhill Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648
switmer@ymail.com
 916-521-3587

Question for "Old Flyboys"

In 1949, the Air Force sought to develop the largest piston-engined land-based transport aircraft ever built. It was designed to transport up to 400 troops or carry 100,000 pounds of cargo over 1,720 miles—figures that surpassed any previous airlifter. Can you identify this experimental aircraft? The answer appears on page 4.



— In Memoriam —

John Marchitiello

Veteran of the U.S. Army

Dennis Olsen

Veteran of the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy

Life Member of the Lincoln Hills Veterans Group

The Veterans Group extends its deepest condolences to John's and Dennis' families and friends.

Calendar of Events

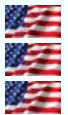
August

No General Membership Meeting this Month

- 13** Ice Cream Social
12:30 p.m., Leatherby's Family Creamery
- 18** Directors' Meeting

September

- 2** VJ Day (1945)*
- 7** Labor Day*
- 11** Patriot Day*
- 15** Directors' Meeting
- 17** General Membership Meeting
- 18** POW/MIA Recognition Day*



** National Holiday or Observance. Proudly fly the American flag.*

Treasurer's Report

On June 30, 2026, the group's bank accounts totaled:

Checking: \$ 2,997.72
Savings: \$ 4,002.84
Total Assets: \$ 7,000.56

Membership Report

The group's membership on June 30, 2026 totaled:

Life Members: 83
 Annual Members: 57
Total Voting Membership: 145

Welcome New Member

William Narez, U.S. Air Force

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Visit our website: <https://lincolnhillsvets.org/>.

President's Corner, continued from page 1

In late September 1965, the *Waddell* departed her home port of Long Beach, California, to begin her first WESTPAC cruise. She arrived at Yankee Station in November 1965 to support carrier air operations. In addition, the ship conducted search-and-rescue missions, combat operations, and naval



gunfire support, including shore bombardment.

The ship later commenced her second WESTPAC cruise on December 31, 1966. Her primary missions included naval gunfire support, search-and-rescue operations and interdiction

of enemy logistics traffic along the Vietnam coast and inland waterways.

On February 3, 1966, while responding to a possible downed pilot off the coast of North Vietnam, the *Waddell* encountered enemy activity. During shore bombardment operations, the ship was taken under fire by enemy shore batteries, but suffered only minor damage.

On the night of February 4, 1966, during operations in the Tonkin Gulf, at approximately 2344 hours, the *Waddell* was struck amidships by the USS *Brinkley Bass*, which was operating at approximately 20 to 25 knots. Fortunately, no personnel were killed or injured; however, both ships suffered significant damage. Repairs required *Waddell* to undergo dry-dock work in the Philippines, while *Brinkley Bass* required repairs at Pearl Harbor.

In the fall of 1966, I was promoted to petty officer third class (E-4).

The *Waddell* returned to Long Beach in late May 1967. In July 1967, I was released from active duty, and I was honorably discharged in July 1969.



Items of Interest to Veterans

Committed Volunteer Cadre Keeps LHVG's Flag Sales Program Strong

In 2006, the Veterans Group addressed the need for a reliable source of quality American flags within the Lincoln Hills community. Dick Schultz, 2005 LHVG

president, led the effort to set up a program to sell flags to community residents on the 15th of every month when the *Compass* magazine was distributed from the Orchard Creek lobby.



◀ The first LHVG flag sales table in November 2006 was ably manned by 2007 President Vern Luke (left) and 2006 President Wayne Ford.

The program endures 20 years later with Bauke Van Oosbree serving as

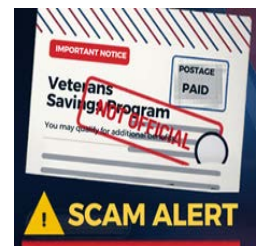
chairman. Van relies on a dedicated group of volunteers to keep the effort viable. Those invaluable volunteers include:

Michael Amerio	Vern and Claire Luke
Don Bilodeau	Rudy Melendez
Fred Buhler	Jerry Mohlenbrok
Phil Cameron	Richard Parry
Doug Cooper	Bill Seabo
Richard Fuller	Bauke Van Oosbree
Jim Lambert	Jean Westvold

The Veterans Group owes a sincere debt of gratitude to all of these committed volunteers!

Beware the "Veterans Savings Program" Postcard Scam

There is a new scam targeting Veterans. The latest tactic involves sending fraudulent postcards claiming you (or your spouse) are entitled to "extra VA benefits" or additional payments, including CHAMPVA, TRICARE, and dental coverage, regardless of a VA disability rating. Don't fall for it.



These scammers claim to be affiliated with VA. They might instill a sense of urgency, pressuring you to contact them as soon as possible, or within five days. Their goal is to get you to call the number provided.

Once you do, they will often use flattery and praise regarding your military service to gain trust. The scammer will attempt to obtain personal identifying information like your Social Security Number, bank account details or other sensitive information.

Never give this information over the phone or on the internet.

VA is monitoring the situation and urges you to remain vigilant against these fraudulent attempts to steal personal identifying information. You can help stop them:

- Refuse to engage.
- Do not call unverified numbers.
- Hang up immediately if you are contacted by unsolicited numbers.

Coffee Drinkers and Deep Thinkers Meet Three Times a Week

Vets Group members meet informally for coffee and conversation on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. at the Kilaga Springs Café. If you're interested in socializing with your fellow veterans, gaining (or contributing) deep insight to the day's events and enjoying a morning cuppa joe, stop by and join in. Everyone's welcome!



All Five Military Services Met or Beat 2025 Recruitment Goals

All five active-duty military services met or exceeded their fiscal 2025 recruiting goals, according to the Department of Defense, marking what Pentagon officials described as the strongest recruiting performance in 15 years.

The Army signed contracts with 62,050 recruits, or 101.72% of its goal, while the Navy brought in 44,096 recruits, exceeding its target by more than 8%. The Air Force recruited 30,166 airmen; the Space Force brought in 819 Guardians; and the Marine Corps met its goal of 26,600 recruits.

Collectively, the five services achieved 103% of their active-duty recruiting mission, according to Pentagon officials.



After several years of recruiting shortfalls, military leaders have highlighted recruiting gains in congressional testimony, public remarks and service announcements.

For new recruits and the units waiting to receive them, however, signing a contract is only the first step. Recruits must still complete initial training, occupational schooling, technical certifications and, in many cases, security clearance requirements before joining the operational force.

— *Military Times*

Joint Exercise in Philippines Focused Seven Countries on Deterrence

"In the big scheme of things, our highest duty is to deter," Gen. Ronald Clark, commander of U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), says. "For those of us that have served in conflict and served in combat, that's really what it's about – deterring war. The best way to do that is to be ready."

This helps explain why Exercise Balikatan 2026, held in the Philippines from Apr. 20 to May 8, was the largest-ever drill in the series. It featured

troops from seven countries: the Philippines, United States, Australia, Canada, France, Japan and New Zealand.



The latter four nations have boots on the ground for the first time, marking a significant growth trajectory for Balikatan.

For Clark, who has headed USARPAC since Nov. 8, 2024, this 41st iteration of Balikatan represents a "full-circle event." As a young 25th Infantry Division company commander, he attended the annual exercise series back in 1994.

Clark said Balikatan "is an opportunity for us to train in a way [where] you'd simulate the kinds of tasks we'd perform together in combat at the invitation of the Philippine government on their sovereign soil."

He also acknowledged Balikatan has changed focus over the years. Whereas counterinsurgency and counterterrorism once predominated, now the focus is "large-scale combat operations" and territorial defense. "It's the willingness of the partner to train on the task that they think that they're going to have to perform in crisis and conflict," Clark noted.

These types of operations would be critical to contain the Chinese navy in the event of a conflict over



Taiwan. The U.S. military thus rehearsed rapidly moving rocket launchers and anti-ship missile

systems to remote islands, for example.

Clark pointed out: "Everything we can do to build the trust that's necessary, in times where we're able to train together prior to any kind of crisis or conflict, is golden." Further, "Building that kind of trust with one another right now, where we have the confidence in ourselves, our soldiers, our weapons and equipment, our leadership, our tactics – and we're doing that along with our partners – it's just invaluable."

– *Defense News*

Iwo Jima Flags Displayed Each Year at National Museum of the Marine Corps

The two American flags that U.S. Marines raised atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima can be seen at the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) in Triangle, Va. every year. The museum briefly displays the two historic flags together to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The NMMC preserves both historic flags from the battle in its collection, including the first American flag raised atop Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945. The second flag raised later that day remains on permanent display at the museum. "It is the first flag that holds greater significance to the Marines and sailors who were fighting on the island that day," said retired Marine Col. Keil Gentry, the director of the museum.



During the battle, roughly 70,000 Marines fought for 36 days against the Imperial Japanese Army to secure the island. Their victory was first symbolized by the raising of a small American flag atop Mount Suribachi. "Its significance was driven home to me earlier this year by an Iwo Jima veteran who

witnessed that moment firsthand," Gentry said. "He described the cacophony of sound as hundreds of ships across the fleet blasted their horns upon seeing the first flag, signifying another step toward victory in World War II."

A larger flag eventually replaced the first. This moment was captured by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal, and the photograph gained worldwide recognition as a powerful symbol of the courage and sacrifice of the Marines.

- *Stars and Stripes*

Coast Guard Museum Scheduled to Open its Doors in Spring 2027

Visitors to the future National Coast Guard Museum in New London, Conn., will find themselves standing beneath a suspended HH-60J Jayhawk helicopter, offering a glimpse into the work that has defined the Coast Guard for decades. Dedicated to sharing the branch's 235 years of maritime service, the National Coast Guard Museum Association plans to open the museum to the public in spring 2027.

► An artist rendering of the new National Coast Guard Museum in New London, Conn. The museum is expected to open in the spring of 2027.



Currently under construction, the 83,000-square-foot museum will feature more than 5,000 images and 600 artifacts in exhibits highlighting the Coast Guard's history and missions, according to the museum's website. The building is slated for completion by the end of 2026 before being turned over to the Coast Guard for exhibit installation.

The museum is designed around five major themes that reflect the Coast Guard's missions: Defenders of the Nation, Enforcers on the Seas, Lifesavers Around the Globe, Champions of Commerce and Protectors of the Environment. "It's a stunning, iconic, waterfront museum that really gives the nod to the service," Curtin said.

The project is funded through a combination of a federal appropriation of approximately \$100 million and about \$57 million raised privately.

- *Stars and Stripes*

Europe's Churches Preserve American War Memories

A sign outside the church reminds visitors that the building is nearly 1,000 years old. Inside, stone tombs rest beneath a high timber ceiling, and wall paintings predating Columbus' first voyage across the Atlantic remain visible. In the south chapel, something more modern and unexpected appears: a bright stained-glass window showing Jesus, arms outstretched, with U.S. warplanes soaring above his head and American airmen by his side.



"The Window of Friendship and Peace" (above) at St. Mary the Virgin in Little Easton, England, is one of at least 30 stained-glass windows in European churches that commemorate U.S. military efforts during the world wars. The window reflects "the special relationship of mutual support, friendship, and lasting respect" between the airmen of the 386th Bomb Group and residents of Little Easton and Great Dunmow during World War II. For a little over a year, the unit flew missions from a nearby airfield.

Commemorative windows are located in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Luxembourg, and each has a unique backstory. Some were created in the interwar and postwar years, in some cases replacing windows destroyed in battle. Others were installed decades later, often in areas where Americans were stationed or fought. Some honor a single soldier, while others commemorate entire units or branches of the armed forces.

► "The Window of the Crusaders" is dedicated to the U.S. 386th Bomb Group, nicknamed "the Crusaders," which flew more than 260 missions from a nearby airfield against Nazi targets during World War II. Nearly 200 Crusaders were killed in action, with many others wounded or taken prisoner.



Veterans who served in Europe and families of fallen troops helped fund many of them. Despite the

differences, a common thread among all the windows is that Europeans accepted them into their most sacred spaces, preserving stories of the U.S. military in a medium traditionally associated with biblical imagery.

- Stars and Stripes

Answer for "Old Flyboys"

During the 1940s, cargo aircraft were relatively straightforward in design, usually featuring two to four engines, low wings, and straight tails. A prime example was the C-54 Skymaster, a World War II-era aircraft that proved its reliability during the Berlin Airlift and continued to serve in rugged environments for years to come. However, Convair sought to redefine the cargo aircraft concept by dramatically scaling it up.

Building upon its recently awarded contract for the massive B-36 bomber, Convair secured a \$4.2 million contract to develop what would be the largest



cargo aircraft ever conceived at the time, designated the XC-99. It was designed with a cavernous 16,000-cubic-foot cargo hold and a towering 20.5-foot fuselage. The

design borrowed the wings, landing gear, and tail from the still-in-development YB-36, while featuring a unique pusher engine configuration. The plane boasted unprecedented performance, with a speed of 290 mph and an 8,000-mile range.

Despite its remarkable capabilities, the XC-99 never entered mass production. By the mid-1950s, the USAF determined that a fleet of oversized cargo aircraft was unnecessary. The introduction of the Douglas C-124 Globemaster II in 1950 and the C-133 Cargomaster in 1957 rendered the XC-99 obsolete.

- Vintage Aviation News

Help Wanted

Event Coordinator - Work with the Veterans Group social events chairman to manage the upcoming Oktoberfest luncheon scheduled for October 23. Complete records of earlier events are available as guidance. Contact Phil Cameron, 916-705-4310, pcam45@yahoo.com