



Vol 33 Issue 1 *** The University of Southern California NROTC Alumni League *** Spring/Summer 2026

A Walk-on Story

by MIDN 1/C Nicholas De Fina '27

Packing up my belongings, preparing for the long drive back to campus this past fall, I looked at my football cleats, sitting in the corner of my closet, and couldn't imagine any reason to bring them back with me. But of course, within days of returning to campus, and in the days leading up to the Battle Study at Belleau Wood, I received a number of alerts on my phone from friends, uncles, classmates, and my father about a post on USC Football's X account asking one question, "Got what it takes to be a Trojan?"

My response? No. I had the opportunity to try out during my freshman year of college, I gave it a shot, competed with many great athletes, and sadly did not make the cut. This time around, I did not think I was up for the challenge and letdown once again. Parting from football, the sport I played all my life, up until my time in college, was a big step in my life, and inevitably a decision I came to terms with.



USC Varsity Football players: MIDN 1/C Cian McKelvey, MIDN 1/C Nicholas De Fina

Yet it was the support from friends, family, and classmates alike that convinced me that this was one opportunity worth pursuing. In fact, it was fellow Midshipman and USC running back Cian McKelvey #41 (who has written about his time abroad in this issue of The Log), who gave me the final push to see this through. He reminded me that, even if it

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Calendar of Events

12-21 AUG 2026

Battle Study Trip
London, Normandy, Paris

1 OCT 2026

Board of Directors Meeting
USC Campus/Zoom

31 OCT 2026

Classes of 1975, 1976, 1977
Reunion & Tailgate

14 -18 JAN 2027

Battle Study Trip
Honolulu, HI

See the Alumni League website
for updates, times and locations:
uscrotc.org/calendar

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From the Bridge

CDR Bob Bennett USNR (Ret) '79 President – USC NROTC Alumni League

As your new Alumni League President, let me introduce myself. I was born and raised in Hawaii (my dad was in insurance not military). After high school I became a member of the USC NROTC freshman class in 1975 graduating and being commissioned in 1979 with a BS in Business. As a junior officer I was stationed on a Guided Missile Destroyer in Norfolk and qualified in Surface Warfare. My shore duty was in Washington D.C. After six years of active duty, I transferred to the reserves and retired as a Commander.

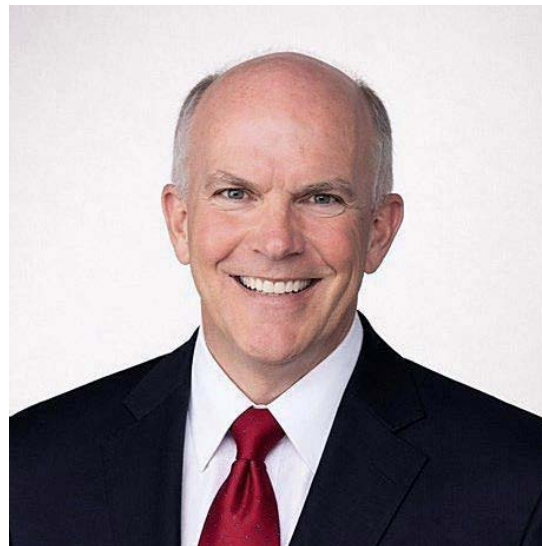
My work experience was focused on Business Operations, preparing budgets, analyzing profit and loss performance, and business development.

Since retiring I have been giving back as:

- As a Government Operations liaison for the Red Cross in Brunswick County, North Carolina.
- An AARP tax aide volunteer helping the seniors and those in need in getting their tax returns filed.
- Treasurer for multiple homeowner associations.

My most privileged job right now is being on the USC NROTC Alumni League Board and being able to lead this organization. The League has allowed me to come full circle from where I started.

In my new role, I am very fortunate to follow two great role models: Paul Alwine and Jim Hull. Paul provided the continuity to allow the League to transition from The Greatest Generation to the “junior” Baby Boomers. Jim expanded the reach of the League with new programs and getting younger League members involved with new ideas. This is a win/win!



My focus is on Digital, Social and Development.

- **Digital** – to take advantage of the new technology and to get interest from our recent graduates and those still serving our country to keep a connection to the Alumni League. Another priority is to capture the Unit's history that goes back 84 years and share it on the website.
- **Social** – to provide opportunities in different parts of the country where NROTC Alumni can meet for various activities and expand beyond campus events.
- **Development** – to provide support to the current midshipmen so they can participate in competitive events. To share the accomplishments of the alumni and establish a process so the midshipmen can tap into the wealth of experience the Alumni League possess by providing resources. This will help the midshipmen to plan and know what to expect as they pursue their goals in the Marine Corps, Navy, and beyond.

It is my privilege to be able to help guide this organization so we can continue to grow. Please feel free to contact me with comments and suggestions.

Fight On!

Bob

Email: robert.m.bennett@alumni.usc.edu



Commanding Officer's Update

Col Tracy A. Perry, USMC

**Commanding Officer & Professor of Naval Science
University of Southern California**

As we close out the Spring 2026 semester, the Trojan Battalion continues to demonstrate the competitive spirit, professional discipline, and commitment to excellence that defines our unit. This semester was marked by strong performance across our training events, meaningful growth throughout the battalion, and the commissioning of a new group of Navy and Marine Corps officers prepared to serve our nation.

Our students represented USC with distinction at multiple competitions this spring. The battalion competed in both the Colorado Meet and the Navy Northwest Competition, gaining valuable experience against other units while building confidence, cohesion, and resilience as a team. These events challenged our students physically, mentally, and professionally.

We were especially proud to bring home the Benner Trophy after defeating the UCLA NROTC unit in this year's competition. The rivalry is always spirited, and this victory reflected the preparation, teamwork, and determination of our students. More importantly, it reinforced the value of disciplined training, accountability, and unit pride. Our students competed hard, represented the Trojan Battalion well, and strengthened the bond that comes from shared effort and shared success.

This spring also brought the most important milestone in our mission: commissioning. We proudly commissioned seven Navy Ensigns and one Marine Corps Second Lieutenant into the Naval service this spring, with two additional Naval officers to commission over the summer. Each of these newly commissioned officers has earned the privilege and responsibility of leading Sailors and Marines, and each leaves USC prepared to meet the demands of the fleet and the operating forces. Their families, classmates, instructors, and mentors should take great pride in what they have accomplished. We look

forward to watching them serve with character, humility, and purpose in the years ahead.

We say farewell and thank you to our outgoing Executive Officer, CDR Josh Ragadio. He has had a lasting impact on the Trojan Battalion through his steady leadership, professionalism, mentorship, and commitment to developing future Naval officers. His influence has been felt across the staff and student body, and he leaves behind a stronger unit because of his years of dedication. On behalf of the entire battalion, thank you, CDR Ragadio, for your service to USC NROTC and for the example you set for our students. Fair Winds and Following Seas!

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome CDR Alex Buschor as our new Executive Officer. He brings valuable fleet experience, energy, and leadership to the Trojan Battalion. Also, joining our team is LT Isabella Cobarruvias, a Surface Warfare Officer who is ready to coach, train, and mentor our students. We are excited for the guidance and perspective they will provide as we continue preparing students for service in the Navy and Marine Corps.

ALUMNI INVITATION: Fall Battle Study August 12–21, 2026

Five USC NROTC alumni are warmly invited to join this year's Fall Battle Study. Participants will travel to London to examine the WWII bombing campaign, Allied Headquarters and Command Centers; embark on a ferry to cross the English Channel and land in Normandy, to study "Operation OVERLORD," to study D-Day and the operations that followed; and to Belleau Wood to reflect on the legacy of the U.S. Marines who fought there during World War I. The

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* * * Bulletin Board ** **Bulletin Board** ** Bulletin Board * * *

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University of Southern California
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NROTC Office Phone Number: (213) 740-2663

<https://uscnrotc.org/contact-us/>

Our NROTC Alumni League members are scattered all over the world and it is always fun trying to keep up with all your moves and changes. One way that we can keep up, is for you to complete the "Update My Information" section of the Return Slip of The LOG when you send in your tax-deductible contributions. You can also email updates with pictures to alumni@uscnrotc.org or go to the website Updates page. We don't want you to become LOST...

REMEMBER!! 2026 Membership Donations are due NOW!

Please complete the form on the back page, write your **tax-deductible** check and send it to the Treasurer, Edward Tannenbaum, using the self-addressed envelope or to the NROTC Unit - Attention: Alumni League, at the address listed under "How to Contact Us" or visit www.uscnrotc.org/donate.

Board of Directors Meetings

All NROTC Alumni League members are invited to attend the spring and fall Board meetings in a non-voting capacity. Reservations can be made with Bob Bennett: robert.m.bennett@alumni.usc.edu. The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct 1 at 10:00 a.m. on the USC campus or via Zoom.

NROTC Alumni Scholarship Endowment

Our NROTC Alumni League Success Fund Endowment principal at USC is over **\$495,000**. The midshipmen of the Trojan Battalion truly appreciate your support via scholarships awarded from the Success Fund endowment earnings. Any questions regarding the Alumni League's scholarship program should be directed to Jerry Vieau '68 at jerryvieau@yahoo.com.

Reunion Notice!

Classes of 1975, 1976 & 1977

31 October 2026: Meet for a tailgate on campus prior to USC vs. Ohio State football game. For more information contact Bruce Nelson, email: bnelsoncal@aol.com, 949-233-2001

From the Ship's Store

Visit www.uscnrotc.org/ships-store to see the latest merchandise available for purchase. Battalion T-shirt designs and official NROTC Alumni polo shirts are available.

2026 NROTC Alumni League Officers*continued from page 3***PRESIDENT***CDR Bob Bennett USNR (Ret) '79***SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT***LtCol Frances Annarella USMCR (Ret) '81***VICE PRESIDENTS:****FINANCE***CAPT Lee Hankins USN (Ret) '85***IT/HISTORY & HERITAGE***Tom Offutt '74***MARKETING/THE LOG EDITOR***CDR M. (Alex) Alexander Wright USN (Ret), '81***MEMBERSHIP***Bruce Nelson '76***ORGANIZATIONAL ADVANCEMENT***CAPT Rick Beck USN (Ret) '82***SCHOLARSHIP & ENDOWMENTS***Jerry Vieau '68***SECRETARY***Reginal Nordahl***TREASURER***Ed Tannenbaum '62***PRESIDENT EMERITUS***CAPT Paul Alwine,, USNR (Ret) '62*

Current Openings: VP, Special Events. If interested in this position, please contact Bob Bennett (robert.m.bennett@alumni.usc.edu)



The Log is a semi-annual publication of the USC NROTC Alumni League. The USC NROTC Alumni League is a non-profit service organization committed to promote, support, and strengthen ongoing ties among NROTC alumni, the Midshipmen of the Trojan Battalion, U.S. Naval Forces, and the University of Southern California. All Navy and Marine Corps alumni of the USC NROTC program (currently over 2,300 officers) are automatically members of the Alumni League upon commissioning.

Send comments to:

*M. (Alex) Alexander Wright '81 e-mail: nrotc.log.editor@gmail.com
mail: See address under Bulletin Board "How to Contact Us" Our website: <http://uscnrotc.org>*

CO's Update

program concludes with liberty in Paris. The Fall Battle Study is an opportunity for alumni, students, and WWII Veterans to connect, reflect, and experience the enduring history that continues to shape our Naval profession. We hope many of you will consider joining us for this meaningful professional and historical experience. Special thanks to Mr. John Gallo: he is sponsoring a dinner for our students during our stay in Normandy.

Spring Hawaii Battle Study — January 14-18, 2027

Five USC NROTC alumni are warmly invited to join next year's Spring Battle Study. Participants will travel to Honolulu, Hawaii to examine two defining military events in Hawaiian history: the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Nu'uau. The study will begin with the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when the Imperial Japanese Navy launched a surprise strike against the U.S. Pacific Fleet, drawing the United States into World War II. Alumni and students will study the strategic conditions that shaped the attack, the operational and tactical execution of the strike, the actions of American service members during the battle, and the lasting consequences for U.S. Naval power in the Pacific.

Participants will also study the Battle of Nu'uau, fought in 1795 during King Kamehameha I's campaign to unify the Hawaiian Islands. The battle culminated at the Nu'uau Pali, where Kamehameha's forces defeated the warriors of O'ahu in a decisive engagement that reshaped the political future of the Hawaiian Kingdom. This portion of the study will provide an opportunity to examine leadership, coalition-building, terrain, technology, and the enduring importance of decisive action in military history.

Together, these battles will allow our alumni and students to compare warfare across vastly different eras while reflecting on strategy, leadership, courage, sacrifice, and the role of Hawaii in both regional and global conflict. Additional details regarding itinerary, registration, and travel coordination will be provided in future alumni communications. **Fight On!**

Tracy Perry



CLASS of 2026 Marine Corps Second Lieutenants and Navy Ensigns

*Congratulations to our newest officers commissioned on May 16, 2026
Welcome to the Alumni League!*

ENS Branden Choi, USN

Hometown: San Jose, CA

Degree: BA in International Relations & Global Economy with a minor in Environmental Studies

First Duty Station: Student Naval Flight Officer, Pensacola, FL

2nd Lt Samantha Coraccio, USMC

Hometown: Hebron, MD Degree: BA in

Psychology

First Duty Station: The Basic School, Quantico, VA

ENS Xander Fessler, USN

Hometown: Denver, CO

Degree: BA in Economics

First Duty Station: Student Naval Aviator, Pensacola, FL

ENS Gretchen Hof, USN

Hometown: St. Louis, MO

Degree: BS in Industrial and Systems

Engineering First Duty Station: Nuclear Power School, Charleston, SC

ENS Lucien McKernan, USN

Hometown: Fairfax, VA

Degree: BA in Economics and Mathematics

First Duty Station: SEAL Officer Candidate, Coronado, CA

ENS Phoebe Turner, USN

Hometown: Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Degree: BS in Electrical and Computer Engineering and a minor in Physics

First Duty Station: Naval Reactors Headquarters, Washington DC

ENS Nolan Walsh, USN

Hometown: Walpole, MA

Degree: BS in Industrial and Systems

Engineering First Duty Station: Student Naval Aviator, Pensacola, FL

ENS Ian Williams, USN

Hometown: Las Vegas, NV

Degree: BA in Economics and Data Science

First Duty Station: Student Naval Aviator, Pensacola, FL

Commissioned on 20 June 2026:

ENS Andrew Villena, USN

Hometown: San Diego, CA

Degree: BS in Industrial and Systems Engineering

First Duty Station: Basic Division Officer Course (SWO), San Diego, CA



USC Gala Honoree

One of our alumni, CDR Jane Mason Pellegrino USN SC (Ret '77, was honored at the 17th Annual USC Veterans, Service Members and ROTC Students Gala at the Bonaventure Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles on 31 March 2026. Jane was honored along with five other Trojan alumni. Here's a link to an article about the event from *USC Today*: <https://11nq.com/kzwhbfu>.

Jane had a great active-duty career in the US Navy as a Supply Corps officer. She first enlisted in 1974 and was commissioned in 1977. She served as an officer from 1977 – 1998, retiring as Comptroller to the Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Jane is now fully retired from her last job working at the Naval Engineering Logistic Office managing the finances of several government programs. She and her husband Pete reside in Seminole, FL.

Preparation Meets Opportunity

by CDR Jane Pelligrino USN (Ret) '77

Like my mother I am gifted with the ability to tell a yarn. All, with some moniker of truth, but all the best stories have a bit of hyperbole.

I came from an enormous family, a middle child. A native Los Angeleno, I went to local public schools and was active in sports and music in high school. After graduation and a summer of doing mostly nothing but looking for work. At 17 I walked to the Los Angeles Rampart recruiting center and enlisted. When I got home my mother cried and my father said, well done!

But the universe generally does interesting things to you when you are open to a new adventure.

Day 3 of medical exams, ASVABS, and every other test, poke, prod, and jab I was asked if I could get into college. HAAAAHA! Of course, say I but I joined the Navy to get my GI Bill so I could afford it. "What if we could help?" And there, my friends, my trajectory changed forevermore.

After an interview with Col. William F. Saunders, USMC, (the CO), I entered USC in August of 1974. I graduated in August 1977 (after a summer session). My first duty station was a "stash" at NAB CORONADO while I waited for Congress to decide if I really could go to Surface Warfare School. Luckily, I was given an opportunity to be a Department Head as an ensign and JG running of all things: Special Services. I was suddenly in charge of everything from a Marina to a Theater. Opportunity struck again and I was blessed to be able to work on the International Sports du Militaire, a pre-cursor to The Invictus Games. This put me on the radar of several great folks at OPNAV who prompted me to transfer to the Supply Corps. A decision I never regretted.

My two favorite tours were working on the refurbishment and overhaul of the Battleship Missouri and as the Comptroller for the U.S. Naval Academy.

I was blessed with multiple overseas tours, Shipboard tours and shore tours. Both coasts. My Navy family have become lifelong friends and comrades.

This Los Angeleno never expected to be able to go to USC and I am forever grateful for the opportunities that the Navy gave me.



CDR Jane Mason Pellegrino '77 (in uniform) is pictured with (L to R) Rick Beck '82, Jim Hull '82, Awilda Pena Bregand (former Unit staff secretary), Lisa London '82, Alex Wright '81 and Frank Zerunyan (Director of USC ROTC Programs) at USC's annual Veterans, Servicemembers and ROTC Students Gala at the Bonaventure Hotel on 31 March.

League Website Update

by Tom Offutt '74

The League website, www.uscnrotc.org, continues to grow and serve as a major communications conduit from the League and the Battalion to our members. The website is updated at least once every month during the school year. Come by and visit often to learn what the Trojan Battalion is doing, keep up with League activities and to read your classmates' updates.

Remember that the popular "Decade Doings" section of *The Log* has been moved to the **Alumni News** page of the website. This way we can get the news out faster and we have added **PICTURES** to the updates. Send in your news and pictures by email to alumni@uscnrotc.org or fill out the website Updates page or add a note to your donation slip at the back of *The Log*.

The Trojan Battalion has launched a new online gear store, making it easier for family and friends of the battalion to represent! All proceeds from the store go to the Midshipman Fund, directly helping the battalion by increasing resources for activities and more. You can reach the Battalion store from the Alumni League Ship's Store webpage. We are working to add Alumni League branded merchandise to the store in the near future.

Did you know that before the Seahorse became the annual yearbook for the Battalion, it was a monthly newsletter published by the midshipmen from the end of 1940 through 1944. All 25 issues have been (or will be) added to the [Seahorse Newsletter Archive](#) webpage. The illustrations were all hand drawn on mimeograph stencils. If you remember the smell of freshly printed mimeograph pages, you were not born in the last few decades! Check out the *Seahorse* newsletters to learn about the very early days of the Trojan Battalion and the transition to a nation at war.

We are always looking for feedback and suggestions on how to improve the website and to better serve all of our members from the Class of 1943 to the Class of 2026. Email your comments to alumni@uscnrotc.org.

Spring 2026 Midshipmen Awards Presentation

The Alumni League presented officer swords to the following midshipmen for excellence in their chosen warfare specialty:

- Submarine Warfare Excellence Award: MIDN 1/C Gretchen Hof
- Naval Aviation Excellence Award: MIDN 1/C Nolan Walsh
- Unrestricted Line Excellence Award: MIDN 1/C Andrew Villena
- Special Operations Excellence Award: MIDN 1/C Lucien McKernan
- Naval Reactors Excellence Award: MIDN 1/C Phoebe Turner
- Parker Sword: MIDN 1/C Jared Park

The Alumni League also presented the annual CAPT William McGonagle scholarship (\$600) to GySgt Antonio Letizia.



Jim Hull '82 presents the Submarine Warfare Excellence Award to MIDN 1/C Gretchen Hof.

Scan this QR code to view
DECADE DOINGS and keep
up with your classmates



The Oldest Son

by Daniel D. Beintema '82

CAPT John D. Chamberlain USN (Ret) '58, was loved from many angles – as a dad, grandfather, uncle, brother, cousin, spouse, son, friend, neighbor, and as a shipmate. John passed away on January 3, 2026, at the age of 88. My perspective in relationship to this special man and this family is unique.

John and his wife, Reni, were gracious hosts when I visited their quarters in Yokosuka, Japan in 1981 while I was there as a USC NROTC Midshipman for summer training. John had earned the rank of Captain and was the CO of the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19), the U.S. 7th Fleet flagship. One afternoon, as they were preparing to host John's boss, Commander of the 7th Fleet and his wife for dinner, they invited my fellow USC Midshipman Rick Beck and me to join them. Upon my arrival that evening, Captain Chamberlain insisted that I become Admiral Trost's personal bartender for the evening, making his favorite martinis. I remember John saying, "...Now he likes these made a special way - so get it right." GEEZ!!! No pressure!



Daniel Beintema '82 (left) with John D. Chamberlain (right) in 2016 at the World War II Memorial in Oahu, HI

It surely was a lesson in learning on-the-fly and developing rapport with Flag officers. John helped pave the way for my career which included serving five different Navy admirals.

John and I shared many things in common, including living in Vista, CA, golf, fishing, camping, a good Scotch, trains, the Navy, our commissioning through USC NROTC, the love of a great breakfast, Black Labs, and the love for, and support of, our children.

Our relationship unfolded for 45 years, emotionally punctuated during the early 2000s with the loss of Chris (NROTC '82), John and Reni's oldest son, followed closely by the loss of my father, Chet. In our own way, we shared with each other our deep grief and struggles. I will never forget John's heart-felt invitation to me, "to be our new oldest son". After taking a moment to compose myself, I responded, "I would love that, and would you be my new dad?" The gravity of that moment will never leave me.

Our trip, just the two of us, to Oahu in 2016 for the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack was a life highlight. I loved absorbing the gripping stories he told of USS Grayback adventures while we sipped a great Scotch all afternoon on our hotel balcony while looking out over the vast Pacific Ocean and toasting the greatest Navy in the world.

He was a stalwart mentor for my career; he was a great source of wisdom; and he has been my cherished friend.

Fair winds and following seas, Dad. We have the watch. You are relieved. Thank you for the love and amazing memories. I love you. Fight On!



USS Grayback (SSG-574) - one of the first of the Navy's guided missile submarines to carry sea-to-surface missiles. In 1968 the missile chambers were converted to carry 67 embarked troops and SEAL Swimmer Delivery Vehicles (SDVs), including a decompression chamber.

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A Walk On Story

if it wouldn't work out in my favor, I would have the chance to give the sport I loved for so long another go.

When the day finally came around, I remember vividly waking up at 9:30 in the morning, taking a cold shower, eating a small breakfast, and moving straight to Brittingham field to prepare mentally and physically for the task at hand. I spent the hour and a half leading up to the 11:30 tryout conducting stretches, working on small explosive movements and change-of-direction drills, and taking myself through breathing exercises to calm nerves and open my mind to the tryout ahead of me. At 11:20, I moved towards the gate to the football field, introducing myself to my fellow competitors, and awaited the staff to bring us in.

It was a quick transition from here on out, reminding me slightly of the Drill Instructors at our summer trainings who would hound us to meticulously follow instruction and move with high intensity between drills. It was the Strength and Conditioning Staff who took us through the iconic USC warmups and mandated that we pay attention to every instruction, order in the movement, and when and where to align before conducting the exercise. It was this that I believe many individuals were weeded out for their inability to follow instruction and react to coaching under pressure.

From there, we were to sprint to the other side of the field where we would be split by body size and makeup to different position groups to conduct position-specific drills. I was assigned to the defensive back position group and would conduct drills with one other student over the course of the



Nick De Fina, #46, DB, USC

next half hour. This proved to be the most challenging part of the tryout. It was drill after drill, rep after rep, under a 90°F sun on the turf.

It was enough of a challenge to prompt the only other student in my position group to lose his lunch and drop out of the tryout. We then transitioned to one on one competitions, where I held my ground well enough against strong (and incredibly fast) competition, seeing out the remainder of the tryout.

The Assistant General Manager, Dre Brown, called us up at the end of the tryout for a moment, thanking us for coming out and informing us that he would be in touch. As we began to leave the field, he called out for "Shin, De Fina, Styles," to come back, stating that there were issues with the paperwork we submitted. As we drew nearer, he huddled us up and told us that "you guys made the team." It was at that moment that I did everything in my power to keep my cool knowing that I was finally getting the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream.

The rest of the day consisted of gear issue, a tour of the facilities, and the scheduling of follow-on appointments to get us established with the NCAA athletic department on campus.

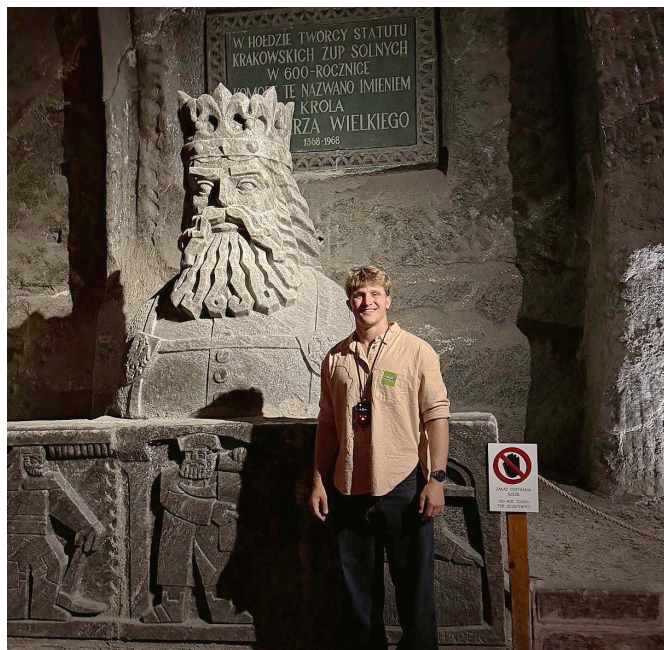
It has been the single-most incredible experience of my life and every day I get to witness how lucky I am to play for our school and for one of the most decorated programs in college football history.



An Unforgettable Semester

by MIDN I/C Cian McKelvey

My name is Cian McKelvey. I'm a First Class Midshipman studying Economics and a running back on the USC football team. This Spring I've been studying abroad at the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland. These past few months have been the greatest adventure of my life, providing me with new perspectives and experiences that I'll carry with me into the fleet.



I began meeting with study abroad advisors in the fall of my 4/C year to ensure my credits aligned and I would have the opportunity to study abroad. After further coordination with the battalion staff and football coaches, my international dreams came to fruition. I chose the University of Edinburgh because it is a top 50 global university, and the city is a gateway to travel the rest of Europe.

The European transition hit pretty quickly for a SoCal kid from Los Angeles. Typically, wind and rain filled the Scottish skies until an early afternoon sunset concluded the day. This definitely took some getting used to, although it made me much more appreciative to walk outside and see the sun shining. The pace of life was different too. At USC I'm used to constantly moving between football practice, uniform inspections, and academics, but in Edinburgh things slowed down a bit.

A full course load in Edinburgh might have less than ten instruction hours per week (although many hours at home

studying or completing worksheets). I really enjoyed the freedom to dictate my own schedule and capitalize each day on my own terms. The locals are exceptionally friendly, and the city itself is unreal. Edinburgh Castle sits on a hill with gothic architecture and history everywhere. It feels like I'm living somewhere that used to be completely out of reach, only existing in a fictional novel.

Edinburgh itself has been great, and living in Europe has provided me with so many affordable travel destinations. I've skied in the Alps, rode camels in the Sahara, swam in the Mediterranean Sea, celebrated St. Patrick's Day in Dublin, and attended Easter Mass at the Vatican. These experiences, in addition to the people I've met along the way, have broadened my perspective and given me a global point of view. Studying abroad has allowed me to step outside my normal routine and explore places I had only seen through a computer screen.

At the same time, I've stayed on track with my degree, stayed in shape, and continued my goal of earning a commission as an officer in the United States Navy. That balance and opportunity would not have been possible without the support of others. I'm incredibly grateful for the Alumni League's support. Your scholarship has helped alleviate financial stress and made this opportunity possible. Thank you! It's been a different kind of semester for which I'm extremely thankful.

MIDN McKelvey in Scotland and on the field



Gliding, Small Arms Training and Sailing Programs Update

by Jim Hull '82

Sailing Program Update:

Our next event with Navy Yacht Club Long Beach will be in early November involving the Alumni League, USC's Alumni Veterans Network, Marshall Veterans Association and the Air Force, Army and Navy ROTC units at UCLA and USC. Look for an e-flyer in early fall with details—alumni welcome! Last year's event was a NYCLB salute to Veterans and a great opportunity to get on the water for a nice afternoon sail in Long Beach Harbor.

NYCLB offers sailing events for NROTC midshipmen designed to build experience on the water. Tuesday races and other sailing events are offered for members of all experience levels. NROTC staff and alumni are welcome to join. Membership rates are very reasonable, and reciprocal privileges are afforded to members with participating yacht clubs around the U.S. Check out NYCLB's website at nyclb.org.

Glider Program Update:

MIDN 3/C Ben Huang and MIDN 4/C Anthony Zhang completed day one and two introductory glider flight training at Skylark North Flight School in Tehachapi, CA. MIDN Zhang completed day two on 5 April and MIDN Huang on 21 May. MIDN 4/C Owen Moore completed day one training on 1 March and will complete day two later in the summer. Weather and high winds led to a few postponements in late winter / early spring. Late May flying weather in the mountains has been outstanding. The League will be soliciting for new glider students in early summer 2026.



First glider flight for MIDN 4/C Owen Moore



MIDN 3/C Ben Huang flashes "USC Victory!"

To promote interest in the level two advanced training at the Southern California Soaring Academy, the League is offering a paid initial lesson designed to familiarize students with SCSA's ASK-21 solo training. It will include a review of the ASK-21 training syllabus followed by a 45 minute flight with an SCSA instructor. The student will see first-hand what's involved prior to committing to the training at SCSA. Students need at least a six-week block of time to fly approximately 30 flights to solo. It's best suited to those in the SoCal area during the summer months or with a post commissioning delay prior to assignment to Pensacola. The League's level two program matches training costs up to \$3,000 to solo the ASK-21 glider and similar funding to continue and earn the FAA private pilot glider rating.

Thank you to the following supporters of the glider program for their latest donations to our program in late 2025 and early 2026: Eddie Tannenbaum '62 (\$2,000), Robert Crawford '75 (\$500), Erik Booth '85 (\$50), Mike Frische '86 (\$5,000), Jay Gallo (father of Patrick Gallo '23, \$2000). We appreciate your great support!

Unit staff and alumni are welcome to come out to Glider Day on Saturday 19 September at Mountain Valley Airport in Tehachapi, CA. Look for an e-flyer later in the summer. See how the League's glider program operates, fly the simulator, then experience a flight soaring in the mountains north of Los Angeles. There's a nice café at the field to finish the day. Experience soaring with the League on Saturday 19 September!

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Alumni League Scholarships

Recipients for School Year 2025-2026

by Jerry Vieau '68

This past school year saw ten USC NROTC Alumni Scholarship recipients selected by the Scholarship Operating Committee and awarded by the president of the League to an outstanding group of midshipmen. A total of \$20,000 is provided by the League yearly - five \$2,000 scholarships given in the fall and spring semesters provided through generous contributions by NROTC Alumni League members to the Success Fund.

The fall semester's recipients are:

MIDN 3/C Luke Donahoe is a Navy Option whose major is undeclared but with an emphasis on Business Administration and Economics. As one of four brothers either in or preparing to enter college and with a single Mom, Luke's scholarship will help with housing expenses.

MIDN 2/C John Breen is a Navy Option majoring in Political Economy. He is the third of seven children and is he is financially independent. He has worked two summer jobs while attending summer school to help pay off loans for food and housing.

MIDN 2/C Ritwik Ganguly is a Navy Option working toward a BS in Industrial and Systems Engineering and an MS in Astronautical Engineering. This scholarship will be put toward his housing and food costs which are only partly covered by his part time tutoring job off campus.

MIDN 2/C Rebecca Wyman is a Marine Option majoring in Business Administration. Her scholarship will be put toward food, housing and the financial costs associated with her pursuit of maximizing her college experience and becoming a Marine pilot.

MIDN 2/C Cian McKelvey is a Navy Option majoring in Economics. With limited time for part-time work due to his football training requirements and class load, he will put the scholarship money toward housing and food expenses.



Scan QR code for **2025/2026 Battalion Commanders' Profiles**

The spring semester's recipients are:

MIDN 1/C Nicholas De Fina is a Marine Option majoring in Political Science. This past Fall he earned the right to join the USC Varsity football team as a walk-on linebacker, through a vigorous tryout process. Competing as a member of a Division I football team comes with extreme time demands, including multiple daily workouts, limiting any opportunity for part time jobs.

MIDN 2/C Rebecca Wyman was also selected for a scholarship in the Spring semester.

MIDN 2/C Cian McKelvey was also selected for a scholarship in the Spring semester.

MIDN 3/C Tehys Romero is a Navy Option majoring in International Relations Global Business. She currently holds an executive board position with JAMS (Joint Agency for Military-Associated Students) She works closely with the Veterans' Resource Center and the Student Veteran Association to plan joint meetings and events.

MIDN 2/C Wyatt Morris is a Navy Option majoring in Economics and Data Science. He is currently the MIDN 4/C Training Officer whose responsibility is to introduce, mentor and instruct freshman midshipmen into the battalion and campus life. He works part time in the Dean's Office of the Price School of Public Policy.



MIDN De Fina '27, Wyman '28, Morris '28, and Romero '29 with Jim Hull '82 at the Spring Awards ceremony.

2026 Scholarship Recognition Luncheon

The recipients of the Success Fund Scholarships for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 were honored with a luncheon on Thursday April 23rd at the downtown Jonathan Club. Ed Tannenbaum's daughter, Carrie, was our sponsor and attended the luncheon. Carrie graduated from USC with her twin sister in 2005.

Attendees included the Unit CO, Col. Tracy Perry, the Unit XO, CDR Josh Ragadio, outgoing President of the Alumni Association, Jim Hull, Scholarship Chair, Jerry Vieau, Treasurer Ed Tannenbaum and Carrie Tannenbaum.

This is the last award luncheon that CDR Ragadio will attend as he is rotating to his next duty station this summer. Ed Tannenbaum presented him with a gift in recognition of all of his work with the Alumni League Scholarship Operating Committee. Josh led the staff and instructors in disseminating our scholarship applications, recommending candidates and vetting them with USC Finance for eligibility, before forwarding the candidate packages to the Alumni League for consideration.

The Alumni League wants to thank all the award winners and Unit Staff for their hard work in pursuit of excellence!



Launching Future Naval Aviators

USC NROTC Midshipmen continue to distinguish themselves in aviation competitions. On March 11, MIDN 2/C Rebecca Wyman (Marine Option) and MIDN 3/C Ben Huang (Navy Option) earned Order of Daedalians scholarships of \$5,000 and \$4,000, respectively, after competing against aviation candidates from all military services throughout Southern California. In a separate competition, MIDN 4/C Anthony Zhang received a Daedalians Flight Training Scholarship that will fund flight lessons toward his first solo in a Cessna 172 this summer. MIDN 4/C Louis Fukuda was also selected to receive a five-hour simulator training package introducing future military aviators to fundamental flight skills.

Farewell from the Bridge

by Jim Hull '82

Congratulations to CDR Robert Bennett USNR (Ret) '79 for his election to President of the Alumni League at the Spring Board of Directors meeting on 12 March. Bob has been the League's Director of Finance for the past few years and is a very active member on the Board. The League's operating accounts have been closely tracked by Bob and we've received detailed presentations on the League's financial status in The Log, website and at our Board meetings. Bob led the way in having our scholarship account recharacterized to our new "Success Fund", allowing donations to be used in additional areas in support of USC's midshipmen. I appreciate Bob's work tracking our finances during my tenure as President and am looking forward to working with him as he assumes his post "on the Bridge".

Congratulations also to LtCol Frances Annarella USMCR (Ret) '81, who was elected our new Senior Vice President. Assuming the post as Log editor is our former League secretary CDR Maureen "Alex" Wright '81.

I was pleased to see a competitive election for our two top League offices. We announced the election last year in the Log and via email flyer in early 2026. We've since had several new alumni join the Board and are now tracking to hold elections every two years as directed in our bylaws. CAPT Rick Beck '82 is our new VP for Organizational Advancement, CAPT Lee Hankins '85 is our new VP of Finance and CAPT Dave Cole '88 is serving on the membership committee. USMC veteran alumni Erik Booth '85 and Charlton Chao '96 also joined the Board, with Erik serving as Assistant Log Editor and Charlton joining our History and Heritage committee.

Consider spending part of your time serving on the Board or one of its committees. It's a great way to participate and stay connected with USC and the NROTC Unit. Thanks to all our nominees for participating in the election.

It has been an honor to serve as your League president. I'm continuing service on the Board with the League's flying, sailing and shooting programs. Thanks to the Board of Directors for all their hard work in making your Alumni League the best alumni support group among all NROTC units across the nation. Thank you to all the donors to our special support programs and to the entire League membership for your support of USC NROTC midshipmen. Your ideas are always welcome to keep the League moving forward. See you at the next League event — Fight On!

Attention Marines!

Do you want to preserve history and help rebuild The Tun Tavern in Philadelphia? You and your classmates can purchase a Tun Alley Brick Paver as part of the fundraising effort to rebuild The Tun. Each engraved brick costs \$517.70. Here's the sample of the brick purchased by members of the class of 1981 and 1982. Go to thetun.org website for more details. ([Shop our store > Marines > Tun Alley Brick Paver](#). Semper Fi!

The Tun® Alley Brick Paver



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Small Arms Training

Shooting program update:

On 7 February, MIDN 4/C Gunnar Balma, MIDN 4/C Parker Finnell and MIDN 4/C Maxine Nocker completed the initial rifle course at the Los Angeles Rifle and Revolver Club in South El Monte, CA. LARRC offers the day long course on the first or second Saturday of each month at a cost of \$70 per student. The course includes a morning class-room session covering firearm safety, rifle handling and rifle shooting fundamentals. An afternoon of target shooting with bolt action .22 caliber rifles followed. For rusty alumni who may be interested, you're welcome to attend the class at your own expense. It's a good review of basic firearms handling and marksmanship fundamentals. The League is currently searching for an advanced follow-on course for those completing the initial rifle course at LARRC.

In early March, eight midshipmen participated in a two-day League funded marksmanship training event at the Los Angeles Gun Club in Downtown L.A. The event was held on 2 and 4 March and was designed to prepare the group for the Colorado Drill and Endurance Meet, which the Unit participates in every year. This year's meet was held on 6 – 7 March at UC Boulder. MIDN 2/C Nicholas De Fina, MIDN 2/C Ryan Tran, MIDN 3/C Alex Baret, MIDN 3/C Wynn Hammond, MIDN 3/C Dhevin Kundu, MIDN 3/C Spencer Williams, MIDN 4/C Luke Axtell, and MIDN 4/C Julian Miles participated in the training at the LA Gun Club. The event involved both pistol and rifle shooting and emphasized marksmanship fundamentals. The League provided \$1,350 to fund the two-day event.



Helping Tomorrow's Military Aviators Take Flight - Daedalians Awards



Pictured above are MIDN 2/C Rebecca Wyman and MIDN 3/C Ben Huang receiving their scholarship awards from LtCol Adam Walker USAF, during the annual Order of Daedalians Scholarship Luncheon at March Air Reserve Base.

The Order of Daedalians is an organization of current and former military aviators dedicated to encouraging the next generation of military pilots. Through financial scholarships, flight training, mentoring, and aviation education, the organization helps outstanding officer candidates pursue careers in military aviation.

The USC NROTC Alumni League is proud to partner with Daedalians Flight 30 to ensure Trojan Midshipmen are aware of these outstanding opportunities. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients as they prepare for careers in naval aviation.

From Midshipmen to Leaders: Investing in the Next Generation of Naval Officers

by Thomas Offutt '74

Every graduate of the USC Naval ROTC program shares a common experience: the challenge of balancing a world-class university education with the demands of preparing to serve as an officer in the United States Navy or Marine Corps.

The lessons learned during those years extended far beyond the classroom. USC NROTC developed leaders. It taught discipline, accountability, teamwork, and the importance of service before self. It prepared young men and women to lead sailors and Marines around the world, often in situations where lives and missions depended on their judgment and character.

For many NROTC alumni, the foundation built at USC became the starting point for remarkable careers—not only in military service, but also in business, government, education, public service, and countless other professions after active duty. The leadership skills developed as midshipmen continue to shape lives long after military careers have ended.

Today's NROTC students are following that same path. They are studying, training, and developing the skills needed to lead in an increasingly complex world. Like those who came before them, they are working to earn the privilege of serving our nation. Their success depends, in part, on the support of those who once stood where they stand today.

Alumni giving helps provide resources that the Alumni League uses to strengthen the USC Midshipman experience, enhance professional development opportunities, support leadership training, and create scholarships that make it possible for outstanding students to pursue their commission. Contributions also help preserve and strengthen a program that has produced generations of distinguished naval officers and Marine leaders.

Supporting the Alumni League is more than donating. It is an investment in leadership. It is a rededication to the values of honor, courage, and commitment. It is a way to ensure that future generations of officers receive the same opportunities, mentorship, and preparation that helped shape our own careers.

Join your fellow alumni in supporting the Trojan Battalion through the Alumni League. Together, we can ensure that the legacy of leadership, service, and excellence continues for generations to come. The future leaders of the Navy and Marine Corps are in our classrooms today. With our support, they will be ready to lead tomorrow.

Every gift matters.

Fortunately, USC has a virtually unlimited number of ways for you to donate to the university (and the Naval ROTC Alumni League). There are two main gift funds that support the Alumni League:

USC Naval ROTC Alumni Fund (GF1013918) is used by the Alumni League meet expenses in the current year to support extracurricular programs (Gliders, Sailing and Shooting), midshipman participation in competitive events such as the Colorado Meet or Northwest Navy Competition, officer swords awarded to top ranked graduating seniors, alumni outreach and more.

USC NROTC Endowed Success Fund (GF1013917) Funds given to the Success Fund are never spent but are invested by USC to provide a predictable source of future income to support multiple MIDN scholarships and other professional development activities.

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Investing in the Next Generation of Naval Officers

Ways to Give

1. **Cash Gifts:** Sent by check, credit/debit card, cashier's check, money order or wire transfer. Checks can be sent by mail to our Treasurer at the address listed at the back of *The Log*. Credit/debit cards can be used to donate via USC's online portal. Visit uscrotc.org/donate/ to access the portal. Gifts can be one time, monthly or recurring annual donations.

NOTE: Beginning in the 2026 tax year, a reinstated IRS deduction allows non-itemizers to deduct cash donations to charity—up to \$1,000 for single filers or \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly.

2. **Gifts of appreciated securities, stocks and bonds:** Securities provide considerable tax advantages when transferred to USC before they are sold. If you have held your securities for more than one year, you may find that your gift will provide a two-fold tax benefit, creating an income-tax deduction as well as helping avoid capital gains taxes that would have been due upon their sale.



3. **Matching Gifts:** Many employers will match your gift to USC, making it an easy way to double or even triple the value of your gift. Please send your contribution as indicated above, along with a completed matching gift form (available from your company's HR office). For online gifts, simply follow the matching gift instructions when you fill out the form.

4. **Gifts of Real Estate:** Personal residences, second homes, income property and vacant land gifts offer a wide variety of tax and other benefits. Among the options in this category are Charitable Gift Annuities that allow donors to avoid paying capital gains taxes on the sale of appreciated real property while receiving regular income payments.

4. **Bequests:** Planned gifts made through your will and revocable trusts.

*** To learn how to provide any of the gifts listed above, contact the USC Price School Advancement team via email at give2price@usc.edu or the Alumni League at alumni@uscrotc.org.



USC NROTC Alumni League Membership

The USC Naval ROTC Alumni League is an all-volunteer organization of the University whose mission is to provide the Midshipmen of the Trojan Battalion with items such as supplemental scholarships, achievement recognition, sword awards, sailing, glider, and small arms training programs. We provide mentoring and an "alumni connection" for current Midshipmen when and where possible. Associate membership is available to families and those interested in the USC NROTC unit, to provide additional financial support to the Trojan Battalion.

Member Name: _____ **Class Year:** _____

Associate Member: (Circle one) PNS / Staff / Parent / Friend / Student / Other _____

Here is my contribution for the USC NROTC Alumni League and Trojan Midshipman Battalion:

\$ 50.00 Annual Member Donation for 2026

\$ _____ Additional donation towards 2026 programs and Trojan Battalion support

\$ _____ Donation to SUCCESS ENDOWMENT FUND for long term support of USC Midshipmen

\$ _____ TOTAL

ONLINE OPTION: To send your donation using credit or debit card, visit www.uscnrotc.org/donate

☐ Please update my Membership Record

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Email Address (please print): _____

Phone: _____

ONLINE OPTION: Update your membership info by visiting www.uscnrotc.org/updates

Update your classmates and friends on your current whereabouts, activities, assignments, deployments, family news, travel and recognitions, etc. This info will be posted to our website: www.uscnrotc.org/alumni-news

OPTION: EMAIL your news and a photo to alumni@uscnrotc.org. We will post it to the website on the Alumni News page.

Please Return this page in the envelope provided.
Make checks payable to: **USC NROTC Alumni League**
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Thank You Frances!!



Frances Annarella '81

For 20 years you have slaved over a hot computer and harassed every member of the Board of Directors to get our articles in for the next edition of ***The Log*** twice a year, every year, year after year. You have made our newsletter into a professional production that we can be proud of. Without ***The Log*** there would be no donations for scholarships, no money for supporting the Battalion and maybe even no Alumni League. You have been our lighthouse and lifeline in guiding us on this journey. Your dedication to the Alumni League, the Battalion and USC has no bounds or equal. **Thank you, thank you, thank you! Bravo Zulu!**