



LCVP in Veterans Day Parade

By Elden Fowler



A direct descendant of the wooden hull Higgins Boats, the fiberglass hulled LCVP (pictured at right) served with the LST USS Wahkiakum County until 1973 when the ship was decommissioned and will be featured in this year's Veterans Day Parade in Marysville.

Higgins Boats, also called LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel), were flat bottomed craft with a very shallow draft specially designed for amphibious landings. They featured a bow ramp that was lowered when the boat was safely aground.

With the introductions of the Higgins, troops inside were able to exit directly to the beach and begin operations. They were used in most all amphibious landings in both the European and Pacific Theaters during WWII. General Dwight D. Eisenhower said of Andrew Higgins, the boats designer "If Higgins had not designed and built those LCVPs,, we never could have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different."

The LCVP which will appear in this Veterans Day Parade was assigned to a ship first commissioned as a Navy Landing Ship Tank, LST-1162, in 1953. On July 1st 1955, LST-1162 was named Wahkiakum County and saw service throughout the Mediterranean and Caribbean seas, was active in the blockade of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962 and the Dominican Republic revolt in 1965. Although the exact date this LCVB was assigned to the Wahkiakum County is not known, it, or one like it, was vital to the ship's operations.

The Wahkiakum County was eventually transferred to the non-commissioned Military Sealift Command and saw service as the USNS Wahkiakum County until 1972. The ship was decommissioned in 1973.

The Yuba County Water Agency eventually acquired the LCVP with the intention of using it for debris removal at Bullard's Bar Reservoir.

In July of this year, the LCVP was donated to the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors and an extensive refit was begun in Yuba City. Major Cary Simpson, LRO, USAF Reserves, was responsible for much of the paint and detail work. Don Schrader, US Army, Retired, manufactured the new 30 caliber machine gun mounts, and, with the installation of a new propeller, the boat appears as it would have when in service.

Following the parade, the boat will be transported to the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors where it will be received by the museum's curator, Dann Spear. It will then be put on permanent display.

The Museum is located east of the city of Marysville and west of Beale Air Force Base at 5865 "A" Road, Marysville, CA 96901.

The Museum is open every Saturday from 10:00

AM until 3:00 PM and every Thursday from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Special days are Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Armed Forces Day.