

A message from our President, Lonnie Mettler



**Veteran Graves Without a Headstone Marker**

The Walla Walla Chapter Reserve Organization of America has been working with the City of Walla Walla Parks and Recreation since 2017 inventorying the veteran graves located in Mountain View Cemetery. The inventory is not 100% complete but we are making great progress.

Several projects have come out of this inventory work, which continues to motivate the work that needs to be done. Noted work completed:

- In the World War I Section, 269 deteriorating headstones out of 528 graves have been replaced. The Third Phase will be completed in 2025.
- In the Civil War Section, also known as the Abraham Lincoln Post 4 Grand Army of the Republic Section, 2 deteriorating headstones out of 50 graves have been replaced.

As the inventories moved from the veteran sections to the general cemetery population, we found approximately 50 veteran graves with no headstone markers. Currently, follow-up work is being done to document the veteran status of these 50 or so graves.

We have an anonymous donor who has offered to match up to \$6,000 if the Chapter can find those funds amongst our membership or other community supporters. So, the challenge to you is, are you willing to help support this funds drive? If you know of someone in your circle of influence who has the ability to donate, please have a conversation with them. To date, we have donations of \$1,250, which means we still need \$4,750. We will leave this call for support open until we achieve our goal.

Let us not forget those who have served and especially those who have given their lives for the freedoms we possess. The memories of these veterans should never be forgotten.

## Walla Walla Team

### Walla Walla Chapter Officers

#### PRESIDENT

MAJ Lonnie Mettler, USA (Ret.)

#### EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

LTC Sarah Bro, USA (Ret.)

#### SECRETARY

Capt William Howard III, USAF (Ret.)

#### TREASURER

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

### Walla Walla Chapter Committees

#### INVESTMENTS

LTC Allen Aplass, USA (Ret.)

#### VETERAN HEADSTONE PROJECT

LTC Allen Aplass, USA (Ret.)

#### WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

SSG Chad Bro, USA (Ret.)

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

PO3 Gene Gossett, USNR  
SGT Ted C. Hanson, ARNG

### Walla Walla Chapter Advisors

#### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

1LT Michael Howell, USAR

#### CHAPLAIN

RDML Darold Bigger, USN (Ret.)

#### FLAG PROGRAM

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

#### LEGISLATION

LTC Ben Morris, USA (Ret.)

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)  
MAJ Lonnie Mettler, USA (Ret.)

#### PUBLIC OUTREACH

LTC Sarah Bro, USA (Ret.)

#### PROGRAMS

Capt Gordon "Mick" Mclean  
USAFR (Ret.)

## Activities Calendar

### Executive Committee Meeting

Everyone is welcome to attend the Executive Committee meetings. They occur at the Fort Walla Walla Museum Conference Room at 9:30 a.m. See the dates below:

**Jan 27, 2025**

**Feb 24, 2025**

**Mar 7, 2025**

**Apr 4, 2025**

### The luncheon takes place at noon, at the Walla Walla Country Club.

**Jan** – No meeting

**Feb 7, 2025** – Ms. Kathy Harries will share stories about WWII.

**Mar 7, 2025** – Ms. Lona Leno, Washington State Veterans Home update

**Apr 4, 2025** – Mr. Alex Hall, Walla Walla VFW Commander update.

**May 2, 2025** – Dr. Pam Murray, Lewis n' Clark Old Bones.

### ROA Walla Walla Chapter 2024 New Chapter Members

- ❖ Col David A. Reinholz, USAF (Ret.)
- ❖ P03 Harriet E. Link, USN
- ❖ Capt Gordon "Mick" C. McLean, USAFR
- ❖ 1LT Charles B. Phillips, USA
- ❖ Miss Linda S Aplass, Civilian Member

## Public Outreach

Email Public Outreach:

[roa21@gmail.com](mailto:roa21@gmail.com)

Web Page ROA NW-021:

[www.roaww.org](http://www.roaww.org)

Facebook ROA NW-021:

[www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090403814151](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090403814151)

### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed herein are those of the editor or columnist and do not necessarily reflect those of Walla Walla Chapter, Department of Northwest, or ROA.

## Program Speakers

By Capt William Howard III, USAF (Ret.)



### Civil War Dedication Mountain View Cemetery

#### **September 6, 2024, Special Program Don Jameson, Commander of Fort Walla Walla Camp 3**

On September 6, 2024, the Walla Walla Chapter ROA, in partnership with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Department of Columbia, presented the re-dedication of two Civil War veterans whose headstones had deteriorated beyond recognition. Don Jameson, the Camp Commander of Fort Walla Walla Camp 3, led the ceremony, including ROA Walla Walla Chapter members. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a congressionally chartered fraternal organization in America that carries out activities to preserve the history and legacy of the United States Armed Forces Veterans who fought during the Civil War.

The dedication honored SGT James C. Mason, Infantry, and PVT Joseph L. Willison, Infantry, who had served in our country's Civil War. The event was a solemn and touching tribute to honor the legacy of these brave individuals. Around fifty Civil War veterans are interred in the Grand Army of the Republic Abraham Lincoln Post 4 Section. Sadly, the original headstones of two of these veterans have deteriorated over time, making their inscriptions beyond recognition. Our duty as citizens is never to forget the many veterans who have served this country and, in some cases, gave their lives for the freedoms we hold dear to our way of life.

Dr. Pamela Murray led the crowd in a stirring rendition of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," with everyone joining in, creating a powerful and emotional moment. The performance was followed by a solemn three-volley Rifle Salute, paying tribute to the two veterans, and the haunting and melancholic notes of Taps filled the air. It was a touching and respectful way to honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans. The event brought the community together in remembrance and gratitude, highlighting the importance of honoring and supporting our veterans.



WASP Badge

### Rebecca's Art of Storytelling

#### **October 4, 2024, Guest speaker Rebecca Hom – Spoke on the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)**

Rebecca Hom is a master storyteller with experience as an exhibit writer, group and classroom facilitator, columnist, public radio correspondent, interpretive naturalist, and a full-time mother.

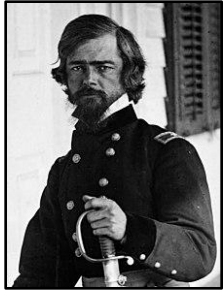
Master Storyteller Rebecca Hom recently spoke at our luncheon, shedding light on the vital role of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. Her captivating storytelling honored the bravery and sacrifice of these remarkable women and highlighted their significant contributions to the war effort. Rebecca Hom's presentation served as a powerful reminder of the often-overlooked role of women in history and their impact on shaping the world we live in today.

#### Quilts of Valor Event during the ROA Chapter Luncheon on Oct. 4 and Dec. 6, 2024



A Quilt of Valor is a quality, handmade quilt awarded to a service member or veteran touched by war. The Quilt says unequivocally, "Thank you for your service and sacrifice in serving our nation." Organized by Dr. Pamela Murray, six veterans were recognized: four were ROA Chapter members and two were Non-members.

- David Raappana, MSgt, USAF (Ret.)
- Gordon 'Mick' McLean, Capt, USAFR
- Harriet Link, P03, USN
- Terry Smestead
- Ron Smith
- PO2 Robert McCoy, USCG



Gov. Isaac Stevens

## Washington Territory's First Governor 1853-1857

### **November 1, 2024, Guest speaker Mr. Ron Klicker – Re-enactment of Governor Isaac Stevens**

Mr. Ron Klicker brings history to life as Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens. His reenactment provides captivating insight into the past and captures the essence of this significant figure in our state's history.

He discussed the two Treaties he negotiated between the United States and the local Indian tribes and the aftermath of the treaty meetings.

Isaacs Stevens attended the *United States Military Academy* at West Point starting in 1834, graduating at the top of his class in 1839.

He served with Brigadier General (later President) Franklin Pierce, supporting his friend's campaign for the Presidency. As a reward for his support, he was appointed by his former Commander as the first Governor of the Washington Territory, which was formed as a U.S. Territory in 1853. Washington Territory included all the land north of the California region, from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to the Pacific Ocean.

He formed the capital of the new Territory in the community of Olympia that year, Olympia being the farthest inland location from the Pacific navigable by boat. Due to the heavy rains, this area had no passable roads. At that time, perhaps only 5,000 white settlers were in the area. These first settlers brought smallpox and venereal disease to the Indians, causing a significant loss of life – maybe one-half of all these coastal tribes, causing a great distrust of the white men.

### **December 6, 2024, Annual Business Meeting President, MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler, USA (Ret.)**

President MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler kicked off our annual business meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance from the members present, setting a tone of unity and patriotism that resonated throughout the gathering. Following this, Chaplain P02 Robert McCoy led us in prayer, providing an opportunity for reflection and gratitude as we came together to discuss our goals and achievements over the past year.

The business meeting began with an essential agenda item: the election of officers for the upcoming year. We are pleased to announce that the ROA members have unanimously elected the following individuals to serve in key leadership roles in the Walla Walla Chapter:

- ✓ President: LTC Sarah Bro
- ✓ Executive Vice President: Vacant
- ✓ Secretary: Capt Bill Howard
- ✓ Treasurer: CSM Terry R. Atchison

SSG Chad Bro reported Wreaths Across America; join us on December 14, 2024, as we honor and remember our fallen heroes during Wreaths Across America. Ceremonies will occur at three locations.

- ✓ Mountain View Cemetery - 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ Fort Walla Walla Post Cemetery - 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ Blue Mountain Memorial Gardens - 10:00 a.m.

Committee Reports Highlight Chapter Progress—The Financial Report provided insights into our current budget, expenditures, and overall fiscal status, ensuring transparency and accountability within our operations. Additionally, our speaker programs have been well-received. Their engaging topics have sparked lively discussions among our members.

As we welcome LTC Sarah Bro as our new Chapter President, she encourages everyone to extend their gratitude to outgoing President MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler. Over the years, MAJ Mettler has dedicated himself to several important initiatives, including the Wreaths Across America and Fort Walla Walla Post Cemetery archway, the expansion of awarding of JROTC and ROTC cadets, and the replacement of WWI and Civil War veteran's headstones at Mountain View Cemetery. His hard work and commitment have made a lasting impact on our community. Thank you, MAJ Mettler!

## Community Activities

By CSM Terry R. Atchison, USA (Ret.)

### National POW/MIA Remembrance Day

*Hosted by:*  
*Volunteers Love Serving Veterans*  
*Combat Veterans International, Chapter 10*  
*Walla Walla High School JROTC*



Mr. Quang Nguyen

The Guest speaker, Mr. Nguyen, immigrated to the U.S. from his native South Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Mr. Nguyen began by giving a thought-provoking speech about freedom and its significance. He passionately expressed his belief that the United States embodies freedom and emphasized that many Americans need to comprehend the true essence of this fundamental value.

He stated that freedom is the ability to act, speak, or change without restraint, interference, or fear. He also refers to freedom as a country's right to govern itself without interference from another country.

A week before Saigon fell, his father took him and his brother to a gate at the Tan Son Nhut airport, pointed to an American C-130, told them to get on, and explained that they might never see their family again. He was 12 and a half years old. They ended up at a refugee camp at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. He reunited with his family four months later in San Joaquin Valley, California. He taught himself English and graduated from High School, and despite hearing a guidance counselor inform him he wasn't college material, he enrolled at Long Beach State. He earned a bachelor's in industrial arts while working full-time.

Mr. Nguyen is a conservative businessman who has been a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives in District 1 since 2021 and has chaired the Arizona House Judiciary Committee since 2022.

He and his wife Mai, a registered nurse, instilled in their children the value of education, a work ethic, and national pride.

### Annual Veterans Stand Down and Resource Fair



SSG Chad Bro

Veterans Stand Down and Resource Fair. The event was open to all veterans. Available resources are on-site for VA services, housing assistance, employment services, mental health services, veterans' benefits assistance, limited surplus items, flu and COVID vaccinations, in-home assistants, and other community agencies, which took place at the Walla Walla Community College.

LTC Sarah Bro and SSG Chad Bro, Chapter members, set up a booth during the event. Over 100 veterans stopped by to talk to them. The event helped improve the ROA Walla Walla Chapter's visibility in the community and created a platform for conversing with local veterans.

---

### Coordination of Chaplain Services at Washington State Veterans Home

RDML Darold F. Bigger USN (Ret.) has taken on the vital role of coordinating chaplain services for veterans at the Walla Walla Veterans Home, co-located at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center. He expects additional chaplains to join the efforts shortly, enhancing support for our veterans.

In a recent online meeting, RDML Bigger stated that he also learned from pastors in Ukraine that many are being conscripted into the Ukrainian Army rather than serving in their roles as chaplains. This highlights the challenging circumstances faced by spiritual leaders in conflict zones.

---

### The Local Chapter of the Philanthropic Education Organization

On November 8, 2024, the Philanthropic Education Organization had the honor of hosting CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.), for an enlightening discussion about the history of the Reserve Organization of America (ROA). CSM Atchison also highlighted the vital work the Walla Walla Chapter is doing in our community.

# Military History

MG Raymond Fred Rees, USA (Ret.), shared this historical piece by General Jonathan M. Wainwright.

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH ARMY  
FORT SAM HOUSTON TEXAS

To: All Personnel Being Discharged From The Army of The United States.

You are being discharged from the Army today - from your Army. It is your Army because your skill, patriotism, labor, courage and devotion have been some of the factors which make it great. You have been a member of the finest military team in history. You have accomplished miracles in battle and supply. Your country is proud of you and you have every right to be proud of yourselves.

You have seen, in the lands where you worked and fought and where many of your comrades died, what happens when the people of a nation lose interest in their government. You have seen what happens when they follow false leaders. You have seen what happens when a nation accepts hate and intolerance.

We are all determined that what happened in Europe and in Asia must not happen to our country. Back in civilian life you will find that your generation will be called upon to guide our country's destiny. Opportunity for leadership is yours. The responsibility is yours. The nation which depended on your courage and stamina to protect it from its enemies now expects you as individuals to claim your right to leadership, a right which you earned honorably and which is well deserved.

Start being a leader as soon as you put on your civilian clothes. If you see intolerance and hate, speak out against them. Make your individual voices heard, not for selfish things, but for honor and decency among men, for the rights of all people.

Remember, too, that No American can afford to be disinterested in any part of his government, whether it is county, city, state or nation.

Choose your leaders wisely - that is the way to keep ours the country for which you fought. Make sure that those leaders are determined to maintain peace throughout the world. You know what war is. You know that we must not have another. As individuals you can prevent it if you give to the task which lies ahead the same spirit which you displayed in uniform.

Accept that trust and the challenge which it carries. I know that the people of America are counting on you. I know that you will not let them down.

Goodbye to each and every one of you and to each and every one of you, good luck!

  
J. M. WAINWRIGHT  
General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

8382-SAAGD--0-20-46 - 06,000

Military History Continued on Page 7



Signalman 1st Class  
Douglas A. Munro

## The True Story Behind the Coast Guard's Only Medal of Honor Recipient

### *The Coast Guardsman Who Saved Marines During WWII*

Munro and others were responsible for navigating landing craft full of Marines along the coast of Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. A month into the Guadalcanal campaign, then-Marine Lt. Col. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller embarked three companies of U.S. Marines into landing craft to take control of the western region of the island.

Munro, only 22 years old, took control of 10 landing craft to move Puller's men to the western coast. After successfully landing and moving 500 yards inland, Munro took all but one of the landing craft and returned to the staging area. Just an hour after landing on the western coast of the island, Marine forces were overcome by Japanese bombing raids, driving out their gunfire support.

The Marines were being driven back to the beach, and many did not have radios to request assistance. **A single “HELP” spelled out in T-shirts on the ridge near the beach** sent a loud and clear signal to those looking on. Back at the staging area, **Munro volunteered to navigate the same landing craft to rescue the Marines from enemy fire.** Nearing the beach and braving incoming fire, Munro directed the landing craft to push forward, even with Japanese forces gaining ground and approaching the beach.

As the Marines re-embarked on the landing craft, Munro immediately navigated his vessel between the enemy fire and the Marine forces, providing much-needed cover for the Marines. **With his efforts, all the Marines, including the wounded, were safely taken off the island.** Munro later helped free a grounded landing craft full of Marines not far from enemy forces. At this same time, the Japanese troops began firing machine gun rounds, and **Munro tragically lost his life after being struck by a single bullet.**

For his sacrifice, Douglas Munro posthumously received the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military award – an award Puller nominated Munro for. The Coast Guard has honored Munro's legacy throughout the past 75-plus years.



Douglas A. Munro

Signalman 1st Class Douglas Munro's grave marker is surrounded by challenge coins, saint pendants, rate and rank insignia, and other items left by military members and veterans.

The headstone for the grave of Coast Guard Signalman First Class Douglas Munro marks his final resting place at Laurel Hill Memorial Park, Cle Elum, Wash.

*This article was originally published in USO.org in 2018 and updated in 2019 – Marine Corps Times, United States Coast Guard- U.S. Coast Guard Photo by Chief Petty Officer David Mosley*

## National News

By CSM Terry R. Atchison, USA (Ret.)

The recent annual meeting of the Reserve Organization of America (ROA) was a pivotal event held for the first time at the historic ROA Minute Man Memorial Building in Washington, DC, from October 4 to 6. This gathering celebrated the organization's remarkable achievements and introduced Major General Margaret C. Wilmoth, USAR (Ret.), who was elected National President-Elect.



MG Wilmoth

### The 84<sup>th</sup> National President-Elect

MG Margaret C Wilmoth

With over 40 years of extensive professional experience, a concurrent career of 35 years of exceptional military service, and demonstrated leadership history in various positions. MG Wilmoth is dedicated to supporting and advocating for service members and their families through ROA efforts.

## Chapter News



### "Walla Walla Chapter Honored"

Captain Henry Plimack presented this year's communication awards. The Art Curtis Sword and Pen Award is given to department and chapter newsletter editors whose communications best convey the purpose of ROA and fill the need for valuable information.

The Sword and Pen Award went to the editors of the Walla Walla Forte, with CSM Terry Atchison accepting on behalf of himself and MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler.

The Ben Franklin Award is given to the top recipient of the Sword and Pen Award. This year's award went to the co-editors of the Walla Walla Forte, which CSM Terry Atchison accepted again for himself and MAJ Lonnie Mettler.

## ROA Recognizes Future Leaders

By SFC Mark Mebes, USA (Ret.)



### JROTC Walla Walla High School recently introduced a new Confidence Course.

The confidence course was constructed as part of the Walla Walla Public School Outdoor Facilities Levy passed in 2023 and built by Obstacle Builders, which builds modular courses for the world's police and fire departments, ROTC, and JROTC programs.

Being a JROTC cadet and a young adult means committing to the task physically and mentally. It requires more than just willpower and courage.



The commitment requires more than willpower and courage—it demands confidence in their ability to navigate each obstacle to the best of their

The course is designed to push cadets to test their limits and discover their capabilities. It challenges them to confront their fears, such as heights or doubts about their strengths and knowledge of their weakness.



An instructor will supervise the course, but best of all, the cadet's leadership and peers will also be present to support and encourage their cadets. The Key lessons that CSM Anthony Marrero wants the cadets to learn are to "have a positive mental attitude" and "be resilient." Most importantly, the phrase "I can't" should be eliminated from the vocabulary.





Local Veterans from all Branches

### Walla Walla High School Veteran’s Day Assembly

The JROTC Battalion’s Cadets hosted the Annual Veterans Day Assembly at Walla Walla High School on November 8, 2024. This heartfelt event has evolved into a meaningful occasion for honoring and recognizing the sacrifices of our community's veterans, allowing the cadets to express their gratitude and appreciation for their service.



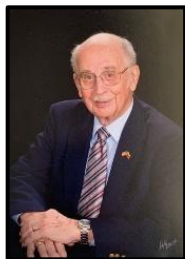
SFC Mark Mebes

SFC Mark Mebes, Guest Speaker, delivered a captivating presentation on the extraordinary challenge behind General George S. Patton, the resilience of the human spirit, underscoring how even the most formidable figures in history faced their own struggles.

SFC Mebes encouraged his audience to embrace their challenges and leverage their unique strengths, drawing inspiration from Patton's story of learning disorders who rise above the difficulties they face.

## TAPS

LCDR Donald Wick passed away on July 13, 2024. He was born on March 19, 1925, in Bellingham, WA. After graduating from Stanwood High School in 1943, he joined the Navy.



Donald M. Wick

LCDR Wick's military services include time at Gonzaga University and Columbia University. He served aboard the USS Dayton and was commissioned as an ensign in 1945. LCDR Wick was honorably discharged from active duty in 1947.

He continued to serve in the Naval Reserve from 1951 to 1973, notably as commanding officer of the unit stationed in Pasco, WA.

## Chaplain Corner

RDML Darold F. Bigger, USN (Ret.)

### The Attitude of Gratitude

*So why be thankful when you have plenty of things to complain about?*

*For one thing, studies show that thankful people have better health, better relationships, and live longer.*

*But if that’s not reason enough, how about to avoid being depressed?*

At my request, a former Prisoner of War from the Vietnam war shared the story of his ordeal. Captured when his helicopter crashed, he was moved around in the jungle for two months then placed in a group of 25 South Vietnamese and 1 other American who were force marched for three months up the Ho Chi Minh Trail toward Hanoi. Short of food, ravaged by illnesses, dodging bombs and bullets, 6 of the South Vietnamese and the other American all died along the way. The surviving American's cheerful attitude struck me. When I asked him what made him so optimistic, he replied:

"There are good things in life, and there are negative things in life, and if you want to ponder and spend time with the negative, then you can be all depressed. But while that’s going on, there’s plenty of wonder and joy and beauty all around you, so why not take the positive? Once I got to Hanoi, I was filled with joy! . . . I hadn’t shaved for five months; I had dysentery, ah, I don’t want to go into all my problems-- They bathed me, put a striped uniform on me, threw me into a solitary confinement cell with a board on the floor I was laying on. They brought me a bowl of bean sprouts and a crummy little piece of French bread that was all stale and had rocks and sticks and stuff in it; probably pretty horrible overall. But after what I’d been through, I sat there in that solitary confinement cell, clean, knowing I didn’t have to walk another step on the Trail up to North Vietnam, and tears just rolled down my cheeks. I knew I was going to survive, that the real struggle was behind me."

So, look for the wonder and joy and beauty around you and be thankful!