

Walla Walla Chapter (NW-021)

April 2025 | Volume 6 | Number 1

2024 19th Sword & Pen Award Recipient

2024 1st Ben Franklin Journalism Award

A message from our President, LTC Sarah Bro



Phase 3 Underway at Mountain View Cemetery!

Over the last eight years, the Walla Walla Chapter (NW-021) of the Reserve Organization of America and the City of Walla Walla Department of Parks and Recreation have been in partnership, moving closer to the overarching goal to **never forget a veteran!**

As headstones finish their natural life in the graveyard, weather beaten and eroded, the city removes them, and we look to replace them.

For the **World War I Section** in Mountain View Cemetery (MVC), almost 270 headstones have been replaced. As of March 2025, the next phase has begun, with the steady removal of the remaining 260 headstones. Replacement with new headstones will soon follow.



Photos of Walla Walla Mountain View



Under a separate, but related, initiative, we also know that other veterans' graves exist at MVC, unmarked. Our Veteran Headstone Committee has verified carefully **95** individuals without markers, **22** of which have been confirmed as eligible for a headstone noting their service to our country. Additional research on the eligibility for the remaining veterans in this group is still ongoing.

Bases will be required for all headstones, whether flat or upright. The cost for each base is \$300, plus tax.

With a matching grant of **\$6000** from an anonymous donor, we hope **your generosity** will bring us closer to fully funding our initiative to **never forget a veteran**. We are almost halfway to our matching goal.

Consider a tax-deductible donation to make this a reality in 2025! And honor the veterans who, thanks to you, are once again plainly marked for decades to come.

Walla Walla Team

Walla Walla Chapter Officers

PRESIDENT

LTC Sarah Bro, USA (Ret.)

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

Vacant

SECRETARY

Capt William Howard III, USAF (Ret.)

TREASURER

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

MAJ Lonnie Mettler, USA (Ret.)

Walla Walla Chapter Committees

INVESTMENTS

LTC Allen Aplash, USA (Ret.)

MEMBERSHIP/RECRUITMENT

MAJ Lonnie Mettler, USA (Ret.)

VETERAN HEADSTONE PROJECT

LTC Allen Aplash, USA (Ret.)

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

SSG Chad Bro, USA (Ret.)

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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

Walla Walla Chapter Advisors

CHAPLAIN

RDML Darold Bigger, USN (Ret.)

FLAG PROGRAM

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

HISTORIAN

MAJ Lonnie Mettler, 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.)
SSgt Scott Keller USMC

QUILTS OF VALOR

Dr. Pamela Murray

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 10:00 a.m.** See the dates below:

May 19, 2025

Jul 21, 2025

Jun 23, 2025

Aug 25, 2025

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

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

Jun 6, 2025 – 911 Documentary

Jul 2025 – No Scheduled Meeting

Aug 1, 2025 – Mike Eggleston, Veterans Treatment Court

Sep 5, 2025 – COL Jim Baker, Judicial Humor

Public Outreach

ROA Walla Walla Chapter New Chapter Members

- ❖ PFC Alexa L. Williams, USAF ROTC
- ❖ MAJ Jeffrey Lockwood, USA (Ret.)
- ❖ Dr. Pamela Murray, USA, Honorary

Email Public Outreach:

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Web Page ROA NW-021:

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Facebook ROA NW-021:

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090403814151

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Program Speakers



Honoring veterans from
19th and 20th century
wars and conflicts

**February 7, 2025, Guest Speaker
Kathy Merritt Harries, Honoring
Veterans' 19th and 20th Century**

Kathy began to weave captivating stories about the military figures in her family. Her work is a tribute to the brave men and women who served during the 19th and 20th centuries. Newspapers and captivating photo displays feature a poignant celebration of courage and sacrifice, honoring our veterans and their remarkable contributions during wars and conflicts. Attendees had the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in firsthand accounts and personal stories that vividly highlight the courage and reflect on the legacy of service and bravery, fostering a community spirit of gratitude and remembrance.

Kathy was raised in Berkeley, California, where she graduated from Berkeley High School. She spent her college years at art schools in Reading and Berkeley, dedicating her life to her passion for art. She and her husband raised three children together.

Along with Kathy's presentations, CSM Terry Atchison provides insights into the history of the Pillowcase from World War II; the display aims to honor and remember the mothers, wives, girlfriends, and other significant figures. These pillowcases offer a glimpse into soldiers' experiences during the war and their emotional bond with their families.



"Serving Those
Who Served"

**March 7, 2025, Guest Speaker
Ms. Lonna Leno, Executive
Administrator of Walla Walla
Veterans Home**

During her presentation, Ms. Lonna Leno provided a comprehensive update on the Walla Walla Veterans

Home and shared some insight into the veterans living there. She highlighted the latest developments and shared a glimpse into upcoming events and innovative programs to enhance the lives of our valued veterans.

With 28 years of experience in healthcare, Leno has held various leadership positions in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Her journey in skilled nursing and long-term care began as a Certified Nursing Assistant, leading her to Social Services, marketing, and admissions roles. She ultimately became a licensed Nursing Home Administrator in Oregon, where she dedicated several years of service.

Leno emphasizes the importance of transparency, servant leadership, and inclusiveness in her work. "One of my goals in team building is to nurture and grow from the inside out," she said. "I aim to empower others not only to understand those around them but also to identify and work on their core strengths, developing into the best version of themselves."



**April 4, 2025, Guest Speaker
Marcus King, PGA, CCM, CCE
General Manager Walla Walla
Country Club**

Mr. Marcus S. King, PGA, CCM, CCE, was our impromptu speaker at our April 4 luncheon. Recently appointed as the General Manager and Chief Operating Officer of the Walla Walla Country Club, Mr. King shared his deep passion for coaching golf and his involvement with the PGA HOPE program (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere). This fantastic initiative introduces golf to Veterans and Active-Duty Military personnel, enhancing their physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. Moreover, Mr. King highlighted the program's partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, allowing direct referrals to PGA HOPE as a therapeutic option. He also reflected on his father's service in the Armed Forces and his membership in the Sons of the American Legion.

We thank Mr. King for his inspiring insights and commitment to supporting our veterans!

ROA Recognizes Future Leaders



JROTC Battalion Fundraising Benefit Dinner and Auction

On March 15, 2025, the Walla Walla Chapter of the Reserve Organization of America was recognized as a Title Sponsor for the annual JROTC Teams Benefit Dinner and Auction.

This event, a collaborative effort between the JROTC Boosters and the JROTC Battalion, was a fulfilling experience, building on the tremendous success of previous gatherings. Not only does this event help raise funds to support the JROTC teams and strengthen community ties, but it also boosts the JROTC program's enthusiasm. It teaches our youth the essential values of teamwork, leadership, and perseverance.

Community Activities



Artifact Acquisition Opportunity

In February, James Payne, the Fort Walla Walla Museum's Executive Director, had an opportunity to enhance the museum's U.S. military collection. With this, James received assistance from the ROA Walla Walla Chapter members and support from the community. Despite its retail value of \$3,500, they acquired this collection for only \$2,200.

This collection showcases an original Model 1872 Cavalry Dress helmet along with a complete dress uniform that includes a coat and a Model 1883 helmet. These artifacts represent Troop L of the 4th Cavalry, an important unit known for including Indian soldiers based at Fort Walla Walla during the early 1890s. These items will contribute to a new exhibit honoring the legacy of Troop L.

Additionally, the collection includes an extra helmet plate for the 6th Cavalry, paving the way for future exhibits that will honor this regiment, which served in our area during the late 1890s.

Community Activities Continued



Included is also a latex American Indian head that seamlessly fits our foam rubber mannequins.

U.S. Army General Order No. 28, March 1891, stated, "Troop L of each Cavalry Regiment and Company I of each Infantry Regiment will be recruited by enlisting Indian soldiers to the number of 55..."

To understand Troop L's significance and contributions to military history, it's essential to recognize the broader context in which this unit was established. In the late 19th century, the U.S. military explored new strategies to enhance its effectiveness, particularly in evolving relationships with Native American tribes.

The formation of units like Troop L at Fort Walla Walla marked a pivotal shift in military policy, acknowledging the unique skills and experiences that Indian soldiers brought. The military leadership was impressed by the performance of Indian Scouts, so the decision was made to create entire cavalry and infantry units composed of Native American men.

Footnote: James often encounters items related to US military history from the area and requires assistance in purchasing them. Your support can be invaluable in this process.



Mathew Fazzari Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 992

The Walla Walla VFW Post was shut down in June by the State VFW due to various issues, including a debt of \$118,000. With an all-new set of officers and leadership of local veteran Alex Hall, they have invested approximately \$30,000 in renovations and settled all outstanding debts with the help of grants from various organizations and loans from the State VFW and the local American Legion. The post, previously known as Grant Farmer VFW.

Around 100 individuals came together to pay tribute to Mathew Fazzari, a brave local veteran who tragically lost his life at the young age of 25 while serving in Afghanistan in 2012. His memory continues to inspire and resonate within our community.

Grant Farmer, a Walla Walla native who died at 21 while fighting in World War I, will be honored by the VFW by establishing the Grant Farmer Memorial Pub.

The VFW building will be designated as a dual charter alongside American Legion Post 32. This alliance is essential for preserving the legacy of veteran support, as it allows individuals who may not meet the VFW's criteria to become members of the Legion. While the VFW requires foreign war campaign medals for membership, the Legion only requires honorable service.



Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed on March 29, 2025

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is celebrated on March 29, marking the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam in 1973. A ceremony was held at Veteran Bob Brock's home to honor this event. From February 1961 to May 1975, over 3.4 million Americans served in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, with over 58,000 lives lost and nearly 1,580 service members still unaccounted for, as reported by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Remembering World War II 80 Years

On Sunday, March 23, 2025, at Cordiner Hall, celebrated with excellent collaboration and a tribute to honor all members of the armed forces who faced numerous challenges during World War II. The performance, featuring the Orchestra, Walla Walla Bands, and Choir Society, showcases iconic music from this pivotal era. It was a vibrant tapestry of sound that captured the spirit of resilience and courage of those who served.

Chapter News

By MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler, USA (Ret.)

Dr Pamela Murray Recognized as an Honorary Member

Normally people join an organization as they see organization values which line up with their personal values. Sometimes the shared values are there, but there are organizational criteria which can't be met.

Over the last few years, Dr. Pam Murray has been an active supporter of the Walla Walla Chapter Reserve Organization of America (ROA). She participates in many of the luncheon meetings, she has taken on the role of coordinator for the Chapter Quilts of Valor program, and recently when the Chapter was involved in the rededication of two Civil War Veteran headstones she helped with the coordination and presentation. She did all this as a non-member of the ROA as she never served in the military herself.

The Chapter Executive Committee debated the idea of making her an honorary member for her dedication, her contributions, and belief in the mission of ROA. Dr Pam comes from a long history of veterans, some of whom served in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World War II.

A request for honorary membership was submitted to the National Office and approval to make Dr. Pam a member was granted on 28 January 2025.

Please welcome her and thank her for her efforts to make our Chapter a better organization.

Commemorating the 83rd Anniversary of the Doolittle Raid



April 18 marks the 83rd anniversary of the Doolittle Raid. On April 18, 1942, 200 volunteers executed the first long-range strike of World War II.

Led by Lt. Col. James Doolittle, 80 Raiders flew in 16 B-25 bombers that took off from the deck of the USS Hornet.

The Doolittle Raid, also known as Doolittle's Raid or the Tokyo Raid, occurred on April 18, 1942. It marked the first American aerial assault on the Japanese homeland. During World War II, it marked a significant air strike by the United States against the Japanese capital of Tokyo and other locations on the island of Honshu. While the damage inflicted was relatively minor, the raid signified the vulnerability of Japan to American air power, serving as a crucial response to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Furthermore, it provided a much-needed morale boost for the American public and military. The mission was orchestrated by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, who planned and led the attack. This raid was one of six carried out by American forces against Japan and its territories in the early months of 1942.

Moreover, the raid prompted Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto to accelerate his plans to assault Midway Island in the Central Pacific. This offensive ultimately culminated in a pivotal defeat for the Imperial Japanese Navy at the Battle of Midway. The repercussions of the Doolittle Raid were most acutely felt in China, where the Japanese initiated the Zhejiang-Jiangxi campaign in retaliation. This brutal campaign resulted in the deaths of around 250,000 civilians and 70,000 soldiers.

Of the 16 crews that participated, 14 successfully returned to the United States or found safety with American forces. Unfortunately, one crew member lost his life while parachuting out. In eastern China, eight men were captured by Japanese troops, with two others having drowned at sea; of those captured, three were executed later. Nearly all the B-25 bombers, except for one, met their fate in crashes, while one plane managed to land in Vladivostok, in the Soviet Union.

Since the Soviet Union was not officially at war with Japan, international law required that they intern the crew for the duration of the conflict, and their B-25 aircraft was confiscated. However, within a year, the crew was secretly permitted to leave the Soviet Union under the pretense of an escape. They returned to the United States or American units stationed elsewhere, traveling through Allied-occupied Iran and North Africa.

Doolittle first feared that losing all his aircraft would result in a court-martial; however, he was surprised to be awarded the Medal of Honor and promoted two ranks to brigadier general instead.

Furthermore, the 17th Bombardment Group, engaged in antisubmarine patrols from Pendleton, Oregon, was quickly reassigned to Columbia Army Air Base in South Carolina. While officially relocated to continue similar patrols off the East Coast, the purpose was to prepare for the upcoming mission against Japan.

Source: Online Wikipedia.org and the Britannica – the modern world



1st Sgt Matthews

This article is about the American soldier "Mark Matthews," The Oldest-Ever Buffalo Soldier Lived to Fight in Two World Wars

Mark Matthews was born in 1894. He was a Black soldier originally from Greenville, Alabama, but he spent his childhood in Mansfield, Ohio. As a young boy, he enjoyed riding horses and earned money by delivering newspapers on his pony. Matthews recounted to family, friends, and at least one military historian that he was just 15 years old when he first encountered the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry. This meeting occurred at a racetrack in Lexington, Kentucky, where he worked as a horse exercise rider. Despite the requirement of being 17 to enlist, his boss created false documents that successfully convinced a recruiter in Columbus, Ohio, that Matthews was of the appropriate age.

Matthews was initially stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where Native Americans served as guides. He earned a reputation as an excellent marksman and participated in General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing's campaign in Mexico in 1916 against Pancho Villa.

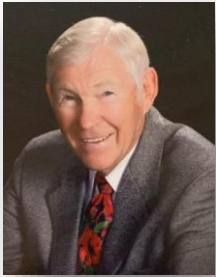
During World War I, he and the 10th Regiment were deployed to the Mexico border for skirmishes involving German military advisors. Matthews played in the polo team and was part of the Buffalo Soldiers' drum and bugle corps, performing at Arlington National Cemetery, where he would later be buried. Due to racial segregation, he had to conceal himself in the woods while playing "Taps." He also fought in World War II, participating in the Battle of Saipan and rising to First Sergeant—1st Sgt. Mark Matthews, one of the last of the nation's Buffalo Soldiers and said to be the oldest, died of pneumonia on September 6, 2005, at Fox Chase Nursing Home in D.C. He was reported to be 111.

Mark Matthews's extraordinary life showcased his military achievements and his resilience in the face of societal challenges. After serving in World War II, he returned to civilian life but remained deeply connected to his military roots and the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers. Matthews dedicated much of his later years to sharing his experiences with younger generations, emphasizing the importance of courage, integrity, and service to one's country, regardless of race.

In addition to his contributions on the battlefield, Matthews was known for his passionate involvement in African American veteran organizations. He worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights and recognition of Black servicemen, ensuring their stories and sacrifices were acknowledged in American history. His efforts helped to pave the way for greater visibility of African Americans in the military and contributed to the ongoing dialogue about racial equality.

Beyond his activism, Matthews had a rich personal life. He enjoyed spending time with family and friends, often recounting tales from his youth and military adventures. His love for horses never waned, and he remained an avid equestrian.

When he celebrated his 100th birthday, he was honored with a ceremony that reflected on his remarkable journey. Many attendees expressed gratitude for his sacrifices and service. He received numerous accolades and recognition, not just as a soldier but as a pioneering figure in the history of African Americans in the military.



COL William Gray

**COL Willard Paul "Bill"
Gray, USA (Ret.)**

We remember and honor Willard Paul "Bill" Gray, who passed away peacefully at 89 on December 19, 2024, surrounded by his loving family in Walla Walla, WA. Born on March 14, 1935, in Nespelem, WA, on the Colville Indian Reservation, Bill was a devoted husband to his wife of 66 years, Elizabeth "Sue" Gray, and a caring father.

Bill's professional journey included a commendable career with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and an impressive thirty-four-year service with the U.S. Army Reserve, from which he retired with the rank of Colonel. All who knew him will cherish his legacy of dedication and love.



Bruce McCaw

**Mr. Bruce Edwin
McCaw, USAF**

We sadly announce the passing of Bruce Edwin McCaw, who left us at 96 on October 13, 2024, in Walla Walla. Born August 31, 1928, in Prescott, WA, Bruce grew up in a rural setting, attending Upper Mud Creek, a one-room schoolhouse, before graduating from Walla Walla High School in 1946. He pursued higher education at Washington State College, earning a degree in Agricultural Economics in 1950.

Bruce proudly served in the Air Force during the Korean War, stationed at Naha Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. After his service, he returned to Walla Walla, dedicating his life to farming alongside his father and brothers.

Optimism

Spring has officially arrived, and with it comes the expectation of new growth: grass, gardens, flowers, tree buds and leaves, and crops. That focus on renewed life draws us toward the future in optimistic hope.

Optimism is a choice, you know. Looking for good things, especially when immersed in challenges, requires conscious decisions and determined attention. Bill Reeder, a POW during the Vietnam War, illustrated that during my interview with him. He said:

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.

Remember the Apostle Paul's advice in Philippians 4:8?

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.