

A message from our President, LTC Sarah Bro



NATIONAL ROA WEBSITE UPDATE - go to [ROA.ORG](https://roa.org) to check it out!

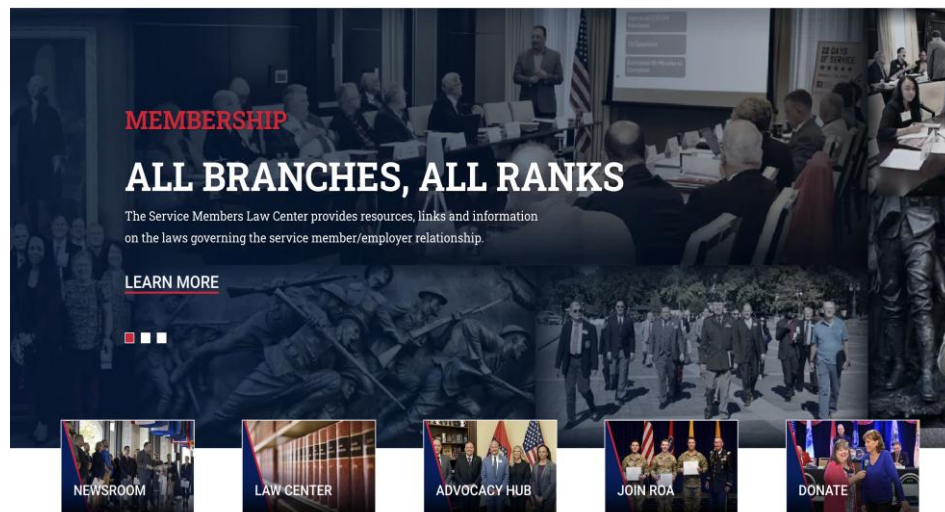
The **Reserve Organization of America (ROA)** has launched a redesigned website aimed at better supporting National Guard and Reserve members through improved navigation and more accessible, centralized resources. The update enhances access to key information on legislative priorities, member benefits, and professional development opportunities.

The site is organized around several tab-driven features. The **Newsroom** acts as an information hub, featuring *The Reserve Voice*, blog content, press releases, and ROA SmartBrief updates, keeping members informed on policy, legislation, and community developments.

The **Law Center** functions as a practical legal resource, particularly focused on USERRA (the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act). It provides clear, plain-language explanations of employment protections, guidance on reemployment after deployment, and information on anti-discrimination provisions and employer responsibilities—especially valuable for reservists balancing civilian and military roles.

The **Advocacy Hub** serves as the center of ROA's legislative efforts, offering an "Action Center" that allows members to directly contact elected officials. It also highlights member-driven priorities, showcases legislative wins through an Impact Center, and connects users to the Minute Man movement for rapid grassroots mobilization.

While there is no longer information on Department and Chapter activity, the redesigned ROA website does offer a streamlined, user-friendly platform that empowers members with the tools and information they need—worth exploring at roa.org!



Walla Walla Team

Walla Walla Chapter Officers

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EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

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CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

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MAJ Lonnie Mettler, USA (Ret.)

VETERAN HEADSTONE PROJECT

SSG Sherilyn Jacobson, USA (Ret.)

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Ms. Jill Atchison

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Honorary

FLAG PROGRAM

CSM Terry Atchison, USA (Ret.)

HISTORIAN

Vacant

LEGISLATION

LTC Sarah Bro, 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 take place in the **Fort Walla Walla Museum Conference Room at 10:00 a.m.** See the dates below:

May 18, 2026

Jul 22, 2026

Jun 23, 2026

Aug 24, 2026

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

May 1, 2026 – 1Lt. Mike Howell, USAR, Northwest Honor Flight

Jun 5, 2026 – MAJ Jeff Cortez, Pharm-DBMA VA Pharmacy Benefits Mgt. Svc.

Aug 7, 2026 – SFC Mark Mebes Wa-Hi ROTC Instructor. History of the JROTC Program

Sept 4, 2026 – Mr. Clay Lindsey, Activity Director, Washinton State Veterans Home

ROA Walla Walla 2026 New Chapter Members

Sgt Gareth M. Clausen, USMC

Disclaimer

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

Program Speakers

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

February 6, 2026, Mr. James Payne, Exec. Director Fort Walla Walla Museum Highlighting Colonel Malcom Fortier.



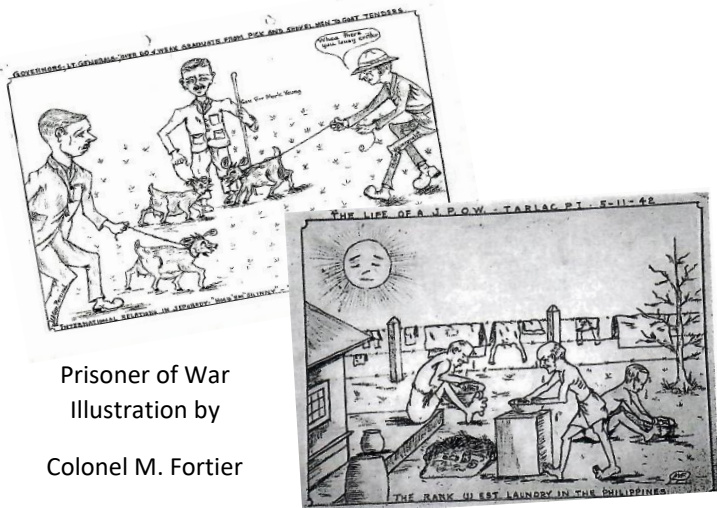
Mr. James Payne

James brings to light the extraordinary story of Colonel Malcom V. "Bob" Fortier, who was captured during the Battle of Corregidor in the Philippines on May 6, 1942. Alongside him were approximately 12,000 American and 66,000 Filipino soldiers.

James spoke to the strength of Colonel Fortier, endured the harrowing experience of the Bataan Death March, and spent three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp. Despite the grim conditions under which personal belongings were prohibited, Fortier demonstrated remarkable determination by creating more than 500 drawings that documented his experiences during this challenging period. James stated that the artistic contributions not only document his journey but also serve as a profound testament to the strength of the human spirit in the face of dire circumstances.

His story culminates in his liberation on August 20, 1945, a powerful reminder that even in the darkest of times, hope and resilience can shine through.

His sketches portrayed fellow prisoners, the harsh reality of camp life, and even the fleeting pleasures of nature that reminded him of life before the war.



Prisoner of War Illustration by

Colonel M. Fortier

Fortier's artwork captured the daily struggles and fleeting moments of beauty that punctuated his confinement, serving not only as a personal outlet but also as a means of maintaining his humanity amid dehumanizing conditions.

After the war, Fortier dedicated his life to sharing his experiences and promoting peace, believing that art can bridge divides and foster understanding among people. His journey inspires generations to confront adversity with creativity and courage, leaving a legacy that continues to resonate today.

March 6, 2026, Sergeant Del Draper, USA, a Military Historian, Spoke on the Battle of Gettysburg.



SGT Del Draper

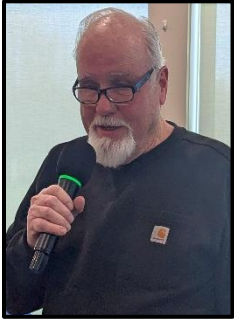
Sergeant Del Draper, a knowledgeable military historian and an exceptionally engaging speaker, delivered an insightful and compelling lecture on the Battle of Gettysburg. His focus was on Robert E. Lee,

the esteemed leader of the Confederate Army, through an in-depth exploration of Lee's different leadership approach. Draper underscored the vital role of Lee's dedicated staff, illustrating how Lee's confidence in his senior officers profoundly shaped both his successes and failures during the tumultuous Civil War.

With great enthusiasm, he discusses Pickett's Charge, a foolhardy infantry assault that took place on July 3, 1863, as part of the Battle of Gettysburg. Draper summarized that General Lee's bold maneuver was intended to penetrate Union defenses and secure a pivotal victory in the North. However, it ended in catastrophic failure for the Confederacy, leading to staggering casualties of around 50% and ultimately forcing General Lee to withdraw from the battlefield. Draper's engaging storytelling and insightful analysis brought the complexities of this significant battle to life for his audience.

Program Speaker continue Page 4

April 3, 2026, Steven Reiff, US Air Force veteran, Speaker on establishing a veteran owned business.



Veteran Steven Reiff

Steven began his presentation by sharing his journey as a dedicated veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. He emphasized the strong military tradition within his family, highlighting a legacy of service

that has endured through numerous conflicts. Through captivating stories shared by his relatives and a reflection on his role as an Air Force mechanic, he illustrated the impact the Air Force experiences had on him. The experiences not only fueled his dedication but also empowered him to apply that knowledge to successfully run his own business.



Mr. David Reiff

**Reiff Manufacturing
The Legacy of
Dedication in Family
Business**

Steven introduces his son, David, who leads Reiff Manufacturing. David stated that the business has been around for over 63 years, with a dedicated focus on fiberglass manufacturing, highlighting their commitment to innovation and quality. He noted that they consistently deliver top-notch craftsmanship in the aquaculture, shelter, and metal fabrication industries. David emphasized that they offer solutions that will impress both your employees and clients. Their comprehensive services include consultation, engineering, design, and full-scale creation and delivery. With a focus on customer satisfaction, they have established a stellar reputation for crafting the highest quality fish hatchery tanks on the market. David also mentioned their dedication to sustainability, ensuring that their products are not only efficient but also environmentally friendly.

Museum Partnership

By MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler USA (Ret.)

Collection Colonel Malcolm Fortier

On February 6, 2026, Mr. James Payne, Executive Director, Fort Walla Walla Museum, spoke to the Walla Walla Chapter ROA.

He shared information regarding one of the museum's newest collections, The Prisoner of War Illustrations of Colonel Malcom Vaughan Fortier.

COL Fortier, an Eastern Washington native, created 458 drawings as a record of the lives of World War II Allied Forces prisoners of war in Japanese internment camps. After surviving the Bataan Death March and during his three-and-a-half-year incarceration, he made these sketches to pass the time and act as a coping mechanism for himself and fellow prisoners.

The museum is currently documenting and curating each drawing. The curation process will cost about \$1,000 for acid-free sleeves, envelopes, and boxes.

ROA Walla Walla Chapter members have regularly been sponsoring the acquisition of numerous military-related items for the museum. You can help save and share the military history of eastern Washington.

If you would like to be part of this process, please reach out to the museum through the Museum Store or send a gift to the museum for the attention of Mr. James Payne, Fort Walla Walla Museum, 755 NE Myra Rd. Walla Walla, WA. Note your gift to be applied to the "Fortier Project". Any size gift will make a difference.

Thank you for your consideration and for keeping our history alive.

ROA Recognizes Future Leaders

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



Cadet LT COL Edwards

Walla Walla High School JROTC Blue Devil Battalion Benefit Dinner

Cadet LT COL Sofie Edwards welcomed the audience, creating a positive atmosphere and urging everyone to fully engage in the evening's activities.

The Annual JROTC Competitive Teams Benefit Dinner and Auction drew in over 200 guests from the community, making it a truly wonderful occasion. Attendees enjoyed a delicious meal, engaged in lively conversations, and participated in an exciting auction featuring a wide range of items and experiences. The funds raised will directly support the JROTC teams, allowing them to enhance their training and compete in upcoming events. It was a fantastic way to celebrate students' dedication and strengthen community bonds.

The JROTC Battalion Cadets highlighted the Rifle Team, showcasing both the "Precision" and "Sporter" classes, which are recognized as national-level contenders. The Drill Teams showcased both Armed and Unarmed teams, demonstrating their skills in exhibition and regulation drills. Additionally, the Color Guard performed at school sporting events, local parades, and formal ceremonies. The Physical Fitness segment of JROTC participated in "Raider"- demonstrating strength, endurance, and problem-solving skills, often in a competitive format. The course not only enhances physical capabilities but also promotes leadership skills and camaraderie among cadets. Overall, it's a great way to foster resilience and a spirit of teamwork while having fun.

The Walla Walla Chapter of the Reserve Organization of America is proud to have been the Title Sponsor for this event. Chapter members are committed to supporting the Cadets on their journey to becoming exceptional leaders in our community. By empowering young people to be responsible citizens, we are fostering tomorrow's leaders.

Chapter News

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



CAP Schrader, MAJ Mettler and LTC Roznowski

On February 11, 2026, CPT Ernie Schrader, ROA Walla Walla Chapter member, presented a framed poster of the D-Day-Normandy Landings to Mathew Fazzari, VFW Post 992. LTC Amy Roznowski accepted the gift on behalf of the post.

The Normandy landings were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on 6 June 1944 of the Allied invasion of Normandy during the Second World War. Code-named Operation Neptune and often referred to as D-Day (after [the military term](#)), it is the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France and the rest of Western Europe, laying the foundations for the Allied victory on the Western Front.

Source: Wikipedia



D-Day Poster

In The News

Future State Veterans Cemetery, Tri-Cities

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has selected a 140-acre site in the Horn Rapids area of Richland, WA, as the preferred location for a new state veterans cemetery. Located near State Route 240 and the Yakima River, this site aims to serve the 46,000 veterans in the Tri-Cities region.

A preliminary design was unveiled in March 2026, featuring burial spaces, walking paths, and an amphitheater.

Generally open to veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, along with their spouses and dependent children. Source: WDVA

Community Activities



Fort Walla Walla Museum

The Fort Walla Walla Museum hosted an open house on April 4, 2026, with free admission for the day. It was a wonderful opportunity for locals to explore the museum's exhibits and learn about the area's history. The museum offers an engaging and informative experience for the entire family, making it a must-visit destination for everyone in the surrounding community.

Community vendors set up their colorful booths throughout the Museum's history halls. The atmosphere was rich with the enticing aromas of local delicacies and the sounds of friendly conversations. Amid this vibrant scene, the Walla Walla Chapter ROA showcased its presence at a booth staffed by MAJ Lonnie E. Mettler and CSM Terry Atchison. They eagerly engaged with attendees, sharing stories and insights about the organization.



Ms. Josephine Wolffe, 1884 Dress

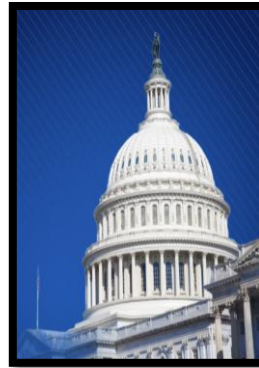
Walla Walla ROA Chapter Booth during the Fort Walla Walla Museum

The open house was a tremendous success, showcasing the stunning "Dutch Jo" dress worn by Ms. Josephine Wolffe. This remarkable garment, a centerpiece of the Dressed in History costume collection, was created in 1884. Its exquisite design captivated all attendees as she walked through the museum's halls, making the experience memorable for everyone. Guests were delighted not only by the dress but also by the rich history and stories behind each piece in the collection, fostering a deeper appreciation for the art of fashion through the ages. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement and curiosity, leaving everyone eager for future events.

Legislative Report

By LTC Sarah Bro, USA (Ret.)

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ADVOCACY HUB



The Reserve Organization of America's Advocacy Hub at <https://roa.org/advocacy-hub/> serves as a centralized resource for service members, veterans, and supporters to stay informed and act on key legislative issues affecting the National Guard and Reserve community.

The page brings together ROA's policy priorities, updates on current legislation, and tools that make it easy for users to engage directly with elected officials.

Visitors can explore active advocacy campaigns, track issues impacting military benefits and readiness, and access educational materials that explain complex policy topics in clear, practical terms. A prominent feature of the hub is its streamlined "Action Center," which enables users to quickly contact members of Congress and participate in coordinated outreach efforts.

The ROA "Priorities" page outlines the organization's key legislative and policy goals on behalf of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and veterans. It highlights the most pressing issues ROA is actively advocating for before Congress and federal agencies, organizing them into focused areas, including compensation and benefits, healthcare, retirement, survivor support, and overall force readiness.

There are fifteen key areas where active resolutions are taking place. Each priority area provides an overview of the issue, explains its impact on the Reserve component, and details ROA's specific recommendations or desired policy changes. The page emphasizes maintaining parity between active-duty and reserve personnel, protecting earned benefits, and ensuring service members have access to quality healthcare and support systems throughout their careers and into retirement.

Overall, the page serves as a clear roadmap of ROA's advocacy agenda, helping members and stakeholders understand where the organization is focusing its efforts and why those priorities matter to the strength and sustainability of the Reserve force.

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

U.S. Navy Pilot Captain E. Royce Williams

One of the most extraordinary incidents in contemporary naval aviation remained classified for nearly fifty years.



Lieutenant Royce Williams

Elmer Royce Williams was born April 4, 1925, in Wilmot, South Dakota. He joined the United States Navy in 1941 following the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1945, he became a naval aviator and served in the Korean War and Vietnam War.



US Navy F9F-5

On the morning of November 18, 1952, U.S. Navy pilot Lieutenant E. Royce Williams was on combat air patrol with three other F9F-5 Panthers around the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany in the Sea of Japan off the coast of North Korea. Their 90-minute patrol was soon interrupted by orders to intercept incoming bogies. Williams was the first to identify the enemy planes as dreaded Soviet MiG-15s. Mechanical problems forced the other three Navy planes to turn back. Williams encountered seven Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15 aircraft flown by Soviet Union pilots while on a combat air patrol in a Grumman F9F-5 Panther.

They engaged in a seven-on-one aerial combat that lasted 35 minutes, the longest aerial combat in United States Navy history. Williams shot down four of the seven enemy aircraft before running out of ammunition. He returned to his aircraft carrier unharmed, although his aircraft was unsalvageable. Since the Soviet Union was not an official combatant in the war at the time of the aerial combat, the United States Navy and National Security Agency sealed all records of the incident to avoid further conflict between the two nations.



The Soviet MiG-15 was one of the first successful swept-wing fighters.

The story of Williams' fight—and success—that day was classified, though he did receive a Silver Star. That award was upgraded to the Navy Cross, the service's highest military decoration, which Williams, 97, obtained from Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro in a January 2023 ceremony. The Navy Cross is awarded only to service members who distinguish themselves by extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force; it is the U.S. Navy's second-highest military decoration. Williams retired from the Navy in 1980, and his medals now include the Navy Cross and two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

Military History Continue Page 8

Williams continued his service in the U.S. Navy through the Vietnam War, flying numerous combat missions and contributing to naval aviation strategy and training. His expertise and leadership helped shape future generations of naval aviators. He eventually retired from the military as a Captain, leaving behind a legacy of bravery and excellence.

More than 70 years after he took part in the most extended dogfight in Navy history, scoring four aerial victories, Royce Williams might finally get the Medal of Honor. The National Defense Authorization Act is the annual defense policy bill outlining spending plans and goals. This year, it is a record \$901 billion. Nestled into the large defense appropriations bill is Sec. 591, which would upgrade Williams' Navy Cross to the Medal of Honor for "acts of valor during the Korean War."

During the State of the Union address on Feb. 24, 2026. The Congressional Medal of Honor was presented to World War II Navy pilot Capt. Royce Williams. (Associated Press)

The National Defense Service Medal is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces

An in-depth insight into its significance and history

The National Defense Service Medal (NDSM) was established by President Eisenhower per Executive Order 10448, dated 22 April 1953. It was created to recognize honorable active service members during designated periods of national emergency or conflict, beginning with the Korean War era.

It is awarded for honorable active military service as a member of the armed forces of the United States including the Coast Guard, during the following periods:

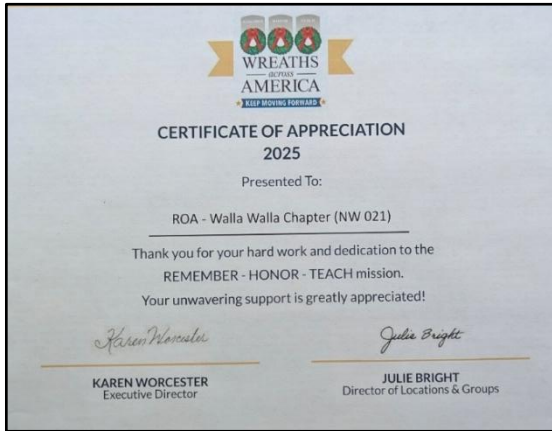
- June 27, 1950, to July 27, 1954 - Korean War timeframe
- Jan. 1, 1961, to Aug. 14, 1974 - Vietnam War timeframe
- Aug. 2, 1990, to Nov. 30, 1995 - Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM timeframe
- Sept. 11, 2001, to Dec 31, 2022 - Terrorism attacks on the U.S./Global War on Terrorism
- Service members who earned the medal during the first qualifying period, and who again became entitled to the medal, wear a bronze star on the ribbon to denote the second award of the medal.
- Effective January 1, 2023, the National Defense Service Medal is no longer issued to those who enlist after December 31, 2022.



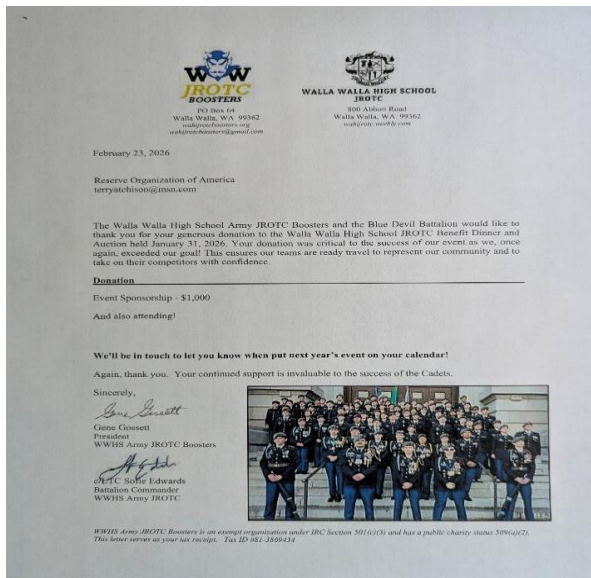
The Heraldic Division, Quartermaster General's Office, was requested to provide proposed designs for the NDSM, and designs created by Mr. T. H. Jones were submitted to the G1 on 26 May 1953. A DOD-appointed committee, including representatives from all services, met on 27 May 1953 and 3 June 1953 and selected the design for final approval. The eagle, our national emblem, together with the shield of the United States Coat of Arms, symbolizes the defense of the United States. The combination of oak and palm leaves signifies strength and preparedness.

Source: US National Archives/Wikipedia

Chapter Recognition



Wreath Across America recognized the ROA Walla Walla Chapter for their hard work and dedication to the REMEMBER – HONOR – TEACH MISSION.



The Walla Walla JROTC Boosters acknowledged the ROA Walla Walla Chapter for their ongoing support of the Walla Walla High School Army JROTC program.

Chaplain Corner

By Rev. Dr. Pam Murray

Finding Light in Challenging Times A Personal Reflection

These days it can be challenging to come up with a positive message. We live in a nation and a world divided. I hear of families and friendships being torn apart due to political and religious differences. The news reeks of anger, violence and wars.

Very few of us seek to escape by living in a cave somewhere-even if we could find one. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be unaffected by outer events in our world today.

Although I am not wise enough to have a solution to all the issues facing us, I 'm proposing a simple practice to help each of us individually to find a bit of peace. I devote a part of my daily devotions to asking myself, "What is the highest expression of myself that I can present to the world today?"

In answering that question, I find that I can be a little kinder to those around me. I can be less annoyed by that slow person in front of me. I can smile at a stranger and say hi. I can phone a friend or family member, just to chat. I can send a card of encouragement.

No, this doesn't change the world. It does, however, help a tiny part of it be a bit brighter. If each of us brings just a drop of light into our surroundings, perhaps we can at least lighten up this little corner.

Sounding Taps

LTC David Basil Murray, USA (Ret.)

We take a moment to honor the memory of one of our Chapter members, LTC David Basil Murray, USA (Ret.), who passed away on November 21, 2025, at the age of 84 in Ellensburg, WA. David was born on December 8, 1940, in Brockton, Massachusetts, and he leaves behind a legacy of kindness and dedication to our chapter.

COL Robert D. Larson, USA (Ret.)

In memory of our chapter member, COL Larson, we honor his remarkable career in the Army Reserve, where he rose to the rank of Colonel. His dedication to military service was evident throughout his service, reflecting not only exceptional leadership qualities but also a commitment to his responsibilities. We remember him not just for his accomplishments, but for the impact he made on those around him.

What Brings Us Together

There are moments when most Americans cheer for the same thing.

Watching our athletes stand on the Olympic podium, hands over their hearts as our flag rises and the National Anthem plays, is one of them. For a few minutes, differences fade. We celebrate not just the medal, but what it represents: discipline, perseverance, teamwork, and love of country. What truly moves us is the pride of seeing our flag honored before the world.

That pride is real. And it is good.

But it asks an important question: what else brings us together in that same spirit?

Every day, men and women wear a different uniform and serve under that same flag. They train, sacrifice time with family, and commit themselves to something greater than personal recognition. They serve not for applause, but to preserve the freedoms we enjoy.

Freedom is not self-sustaining. It is safeguarded by individuals, real people with names, families, and stories. The challenge we face today is not a lack of patriotism, but how we pass it on.

Children learn by watching what we celebrate and what we remember. When they see us cheer for “USA,” they learn pride. When they see us thank a service member, place a wreath on a veteran’s grave, or speak the name of a fallen hero, they learn gratitude and responsibility.

What, and who, we choose to honor teaches our children who we are. And it helps shape who they will become.



That is why our mission to remember, honor and teach, matters now more than ever.

“Teach the children so it will not be necessary to teach the adults.” - Abraham Lincoln

Remember. Honor. Teach.
With gratitude,
Karen Worcester, Executive Director