



Department of Northwest

ANNUAL MEETING 25 April 2026

Meeting called to order at 1000 by Peter Halver

Peter Halver led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation by Deborah Halver-Hanson

Members Present: Peter Halver, Judy Ford, Rickey Thomas, Deborah Halver-Hanson, Ed Brock Gary Ausman, Margaret Cope, Chad Bro, David Foley, Robbie Brockliss, Larry Neil, Elise Rowe, Lonnie Mettler, Allen Aplass, Terry Atchison, Karola, Cochran. Chapters represented: Virtual 001, Bremerton 002, Seattle 015, Spokane 018, Walla Walla 021. Quorum met.

Minutes: Motion from Chad Stoddard, seconded by Margaret Cope to approve last year's meeting. Minutes approved.

Officer Reports

Army: Deborah Halver-Hanson reported the A-10 close support aircraft was extended to 2030. The F35 was supposed to replace it but it is so fast and flies high that it is susceptible to heat seeking missiles. The A10 A report on the cause of the DC crash was 2-fold. Army pilot had night vision glasses on which limits field of vision and the air traffic controller was released without a blood test and no after action report was completed for 2 days after the accident. Final report will be later this year or next year. The Bradley has a new MOS. It used to be if you were in the Bradley, you were 11B. They split that so if you are inside the tank, you are 19C and if outside the tank you are 11B. New competition for Active Duty includes 12 countries taking place for active duty. Specialty team took marksmanship first 3 places. Fourth was ANG and Fifth to Irish team. Third Army Corps developed the spiritual fitness holistic combat book. Talks about physical fitness, hand-to-hand combat, nutrition, sleep, spiritual, and mental needs of members. VA going to remove 7,000 more people in human resource, admin, and nursing.

Navy: Ed Brock reported the most compelling thing is the Navy Secretary got sacked by Hegseth. Don't know what it means. We are in a blockade situation in the Strait of Hormuz. We took down Iranian ship and Iran is deploying patrol craft to cause problems. Lack of support from UN. Navy got rid of all its mind sweepers. Navy Reserve got full commitment of to Navy Reserve.

Air Force: Margaret Cope reported The Air Force's A-10 (Warthogs) will remain until 2030. The decision came late and details are not yet set, officials said. Three A-10 squadrons will remain, with one Active-Duty squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., scheduled for shutdown in 2029,

and two others—a second Active-Duty squadron at Moody and a Reserve squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., holding out until 2030. Each squadron is expected to keep 18 Warthogs. Operation Epic Fury once again showed off the utility and flexibility of the A-10, which was employed repeatedly to keep enemy forces at bay during the Easter weekend rescue of two F-15E Strike Eagle aviators. One A-10 was damaged by ground fire and ultimately lost, but the pilot safely ejected in friendly territory.

A U.S. KC-135 Stratotanker refueling aircraft crashed in western Iraq on March 12, 2026, killing all six crew members while flying over friendly airspace during Operation Epic Fury.

The crash occurred during a midair refueling mission in support of U.S. operations against Iran, known as **Operation Epic Fury**. Two KC-135 aircraft were involved in the incident; one crashed near Turaibil along the Iraqi-Jordanian border, while the other landed safely in Israel. U.S. Central Command confirmed that the crash was **not caused by hostile or friendly fire**, and the circumstances remain under investigation, with a midair collision considered a possible factor.

All six U.S. service members aboard the crashed KC-135 were killed. They included:

- **Maj. John A. Klinner**, 33, Auburn, Alabama
- **Capt. Ariana G. Savino**, 31, Covington, Washington
- **Tech. Sgt. Ashley B. Pruitt**, 34, Bardstown, Kentucky
- **Capt. Seth R. Koval**, 38, Mooresville, Indiana
- **Capt. Curtis J. Angst**, 30, Wilmington, Ohio
- **Tech. Sgt. Tyler H. Simmons**, 28, Columbus, Ohio

Three of the airmen were assigned to the **6th Air Refueling Wing** at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, and three to the **121st Air Refueling Wing** at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, Ohio. Memorial services have been held to honor their service and sacrifice.

National Councilman: Ed Brock reported the most important will be hearing from John Hashem. He introduced 3 new players. Steve Minyard, programs; Kayla Martin, Promoter/ Fund Raising; and Melani Miller Harig, Communications. Discussion on loss of reserve billets particularly Army. He indicated the elements of the Reserve Voice will only be digital next year. Steve Minyard had interesting comments that there are 800,00 enlisted reserves, 8,000 very senior. Petty Officers/NCO Academy continues. We should be engaging with reservist anywhere we can. Later in the day had a President's meeting and had an interesting exchange of us not doing our job when meeting. Recommended giving challenge coins for ROTC rewards. Recommended giving awards to year 1, 2, and 3 so they can wear the ribbons for multiple years, instead of seniors who would only wear them briefly. If you get a new business card, get the QR code on the back.

Margaret Cope highlighted presentations of ROTC and JROTC meet with young people interested military and give them the opportunity to meet community leaders. Not everyone said it was a good idea. There is value in seniors getting the award as they go to their first duty station.

Ed continued and said ROA is talking about developing a surviving spouse folder.

Sarah Bro asked what it would cover since we have options for survivor benefits. What do they hope to achieve?

Ed indicated this would be directed at reservists who may not be close to a reserve facility. We would be able to say, “here is some information, some contacts. You may not recall every decision that was made, but here are some phone numbers and websites that could assist you. Similar to Yellow Ribbon.

Ed passed around the 29 Strategic Plan brochure and a copy of the 2026 March Leaders advocate booklet.

Treasurer Report: This is a short synopsis of the department current treasury covering the first four months of the 2026. Convention expenditures are not included as yet because they are unknown until after the meeting.

Chase Bank	\$14,386 operating expenses
Pen Fed	\$ 4,262 savings
Pen Fed	\$57,649 CD
Pen Fed	<u>\$16,466 CD</u>
Total	\$ 92,763 2025 at this time it was \$87,818

The 2 CDs with Pentagon Federal Credit Union mature in June and will be reinvested at the best earning rate possible. If you have any concerns or questions, please email Rickey at randstthomas@comcast.net. We blew the budget on ROTC medals. Budgeted \$700-750 and spent \$1500. Don't have the weekend expenditures from the hotel. \$2500 in registration and should break even or a little ahead. Will update the report. Budget in the black. Motion made by Ed Brock and seconded by Deborah Halver-Hanson to accept treasurer report. Motion accepted with one abstention. There was discussion about getting close to the \$100,000 mark and the need to spend some money down. Over \$100,000 is another IRS category.

Budget Committee: Peter Halver indicated it has not met. Supposed to get together to discuss items for this meeting but didn't. Treasurer is ex officio member and basically just the accountant. There was discussion about having a stipend for those who travel long distances to present medals and other things. Rickey said the committee may address it if they wish.

Constitution & Bylaws: Judy Ford explained we may need to adjust the bylaws based on the changes made to National Council policy where Dept of Northwest reps would be elected in even years. We currently have the National Councilman serving a 3-year term. Ed Brock indicated that the Council does not dictate Department elections and process. This will be further clarified. Gary Ausman indicated the C&B is current and does not need changes.

Membership: Judy Ford indicated we only had one new member so far this year with several losses. There was some discussion on the lack of ability to send messages to members. Diane Markham, at national was going to send a link to all chapter presidents with directions on how to message chapter members. Still working on Department messaging.

Annual Meeting: Ed Brock indicated he would like to rotate meeting place as in the past with East, Mid, and West. This equalizes the distances traveled. He further stated that he has initiated

discussions with a Marriott-owned facility in Ellensburg, where he proposes to hold the next meeting. He will try to stop on his way home to continue discussions. There was discussion about having a one day conference, but people travel one day, attend the next day, spend the night, and leave the next morning; so, it is three days. There was also discussion about going to a military facility such as Astoria since Pacific Beach no longer has the accommodation for meetings.

Family Readiness: Barb Stoddard reported the Children's Writing Contest is now in progress. Deadline is June 15. Judy Ford reported it was put on our website. Yellow ribbon events are also listed. Unable to order Yellow Ribbon Supplies on line since the form is no longer available.

Awards Coordinator: Barb Kiliz was not present but she has doubled the number of medals and certificates being presented.

Chapter Reports

015 Seattle: Rickey Thomas reported they were alive but not doing much. 7-8 members meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Scotts Bar & Grill in Edmonds, across from Aurora Village. Haven't been able to renew meetings following COVID. Trying to get a group for lunch or evening. Larry Searle still struggling.

018 Spokane: Larry Neil has been Secretary/Treasurer for 30 years. Last year tried to activate and get people on the board. Ed Brock moved into the area and out of 99 members, 68 with bad addresses or phone number. Ed Brock and Larry Neil made phone calls, sent 3 letters for meetings, 2 members showed up. Guests, new members, but didn't work. Still looking at the fact Walla Walla has newsletter, zoom capability. Considering merging with Walla Walla. There is \$2899 in the treasury ready to go to Walla Walla. We will put out one more letter to see if anyone wants to step up. If not, merger is what we will pursue. Ed Brock mentioned that Larry Neil has been unbelievably responsive.

021 Walla Walla: Sarah Bro reported the Walla Walla Chapter EXCOM meets 11 times a year (not in January) and our members meet 10 times a year (not in January and July), with a business meeting in December. EXCOM recently updated the Chapter's bylaws. Member meetings take place at the Walla Walla Country Club at noon. We currently have 110 members. Roughly 20-25 members make the monthly luncheon meetings.

The Chapter continues to do great work in our local community! Since the last Annual Meeting, we have:

- continued our monthly speaker program for all our member meetings. We have 9 speakers over the year and many come from within the chapter itself. Topics shared include military history, personal stories, and veterans initiatives.
- secured sponsorships from local businesses and individuals for 530 wreaths with Wreaths Across America, which were placed at Mountain View Cemetery, Fort Walla Walla Post Cemetery, and Blue Mountain Memorial Gardens in Walla Walla & College Place on Wreaths Across America Day, December 13. For each sponsored wreath, our

chapter receives \$5. The money raised under this initiative supports our veteran's headstone preservation and restoration initiative.

- funded replacement of 170 headstones in the WWI section of Mountain View Cemetery, to replace those that were fading or collapsing. We also assist with cleaning the headstones of our veterans in this cemetery, where there are close to 3500 known veterans buried
- honored two members in our chapter each with a Quilt of Valor. They are leaders of our local JRTOC program at Walla Walla High School.
- presented coins and ROA certificates to JROTC and ROTC cadets at two locations
- released a new tri-fold brochure called "Walla Walla Chapter - What We Do!" which outlines all our local initiatives to never forget a veteran.
- set up our display at four different venues, to encourage recruitment and awareness
- sponsored the new X-Plane Flight Simulator for the Civil Air Patrol Twin W Composite Squadron, whose chapter now has 12 cadets in place.
- Our Chapter newsletter, the Forté (edited by CSM Terry Atchison and MAJ Lonnie Mettler), received the Sword & Pen award at the 2025 National ROA Annual Meeting.
- We continue to maintain a website as well as a Facebook page.

As active as we are, recruitment remains **elusive**. While we have a couple active duty members in our chapter, Sarah is the most recently separated member, having retired from the Army in 2019. Our members continue to age out and we are continually brainstorming ways we can bring in new members.

Major General John F. Hashem, USA (Ret), ROA Executive Director was the luncheon speaker via Zoom. He spoke of the Strategic Plan and its implementation. He also mentioned the addition of staff to the National Organization and how things will improve interactions with younger reservist. They are also moving to provide and focus activities on a Reservist Bill of Rights.

Service Section Results:

Army: Deborah Halver-Hanson inducted the Army received new packet for Jr. NCO of the year package. Presented nominees Deborah Halver-Hanson as VP, Chad Bro as Jr. VP, and Chad Stoddard as Committeeman

Navy: Ed Brock presented nominees Ed Brock as Department President, Gary Ausman as VP, no Jr. VP, and Stan Smith as Committeeman

Air Force: Margaret Cope presented nominees Margaret Cope as VP, no Jr. VP, and Elise Rowe as Committeeman

ROA Strategic Plan: John Hashem updated the members on Vision 29. It includes Champion the Reserves, Empower the Member, Strengthen the Institution, and Secure the Future. A Reservist Bill of Rights was also developed and John made changes in national staff to help meet the goals. Three new staff were hired; Steven Minyard, director of programs, Melani Miler Harig, Digital Communications Manager, and Kayla Martin, Development and Fundraiser Manager.

ROA Reporter: Sarah Bro reported we publish 3x a year (February, June, and November). Information should be sent to Sarah by 15 January, 15 May, and 15 October. Digital and a 4-page format. The 4-page gets sent to those without email and is much condensed from the digital. The Digital is posted on the ROANW.org website and can contain unlimited information. Be sure to send pictures.

Department Website: The department website is up and running. There have been 370 visits to the site. The webmaster does not format information, they post what is sent from the President, VP's, Committee Chairs, and other elected officers. The website is ROANW.org.

Zoom Account: If anyone needs to have a meeting, let Peter Halver know and he will set it up.

The Good of the Order: Peter Haver received a letter from USO in Support of the Unit and indicated as of April 1st, they merged with USO in DC but donation stays local. He also received a "Thank you", from Fisher House.

A motion was made by Barb Stoddard for 100% of the auction money go to Fisher House. Chad Stoddard seconded the motion and it passed by voice vote.

A Thank you to Deborah Halver-Hanson, Pete Halver, and Robbie Brockliss for all the work putting together the meeting.

Officers elected and Installed

Peter Halver presented Gary Ausman with his 60-year Long Timer award.

Meeting adjourned at 1518.