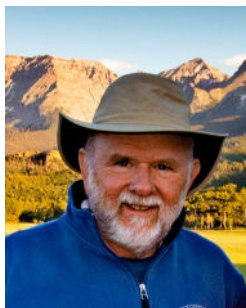


President's Message



John Pierce

WRS OFFICERS

Elected Officers

President

COL (R) John Pierce

First Vice President

COL (R) Brian Foley

VP Communications

CSM (R) Ricardo Alcantara

VP Development

Vacant

VP Membership

Vacant

VP Patient Services

SGM (R) Dan Bullis

VP Programs

Vacant

VP Finance

Vacant

VP Projects

COL (R) S. Avery Davis

Secretary

COL (R) Edward Coll

Treasurer

LTC (R) John Wetterau

Historian

COL (R) John Pierce

Appointed

Director Public Relations

Tansill Johnson

Liaison to Other Non-profits

Rick Erdtmann

Liaison to Alexander T. Augusta

Military Medical Center/ATAMMC

Clarice Gross

Liaison Sports and Recreation

Carlton Kammerer

Administrator (ex-officio)

Editorial/Graphics/Design

Hermalene M. Taylor

Office of Distinction

President Emeritus

Maj Gen (R) Enrique Mendez

President Emerita

COL (R) Janet Southby

Past President

COL (R) Joseph Konzelman

The Society is constantly looking for ways to expand our assistance to military patients, families and hospital staff. As you know we broadened our mission a few years ago to include military health care facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR). In recent years we have been blessed with significant donations and have funds to meet all appropriate requests within the NCR. Therefore, the Board of Directors has considered on a case by case basis requests for assistance from organizations outside the NCR. This newsletter contains an article about one such organization — Operation Key West. I think you will be impressed by their work.

As we all know the only constant is change. In our last newsletter we highlighted bios of new leadership at both Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center (ATAMMC) at Ft. Belvoir. Since then the leadership of the Society met with both CAPT Melissa Austin, Director at WRNMMC and COL Elba Villacorta, Director at ATAMMC and their Senior Enlisted Leaders. The meetings were very positive as both were aware of our activities to support patients, families and staff.

During this past year and continuing into 2024 the Society has taken on two large administrative projects. One mentioned previously, the rewrite and update of our foundational documents: the Society's Articles of Incorporation with the District of Columbia, our By-Laws and Constitution. This effort is headed by COL (Ret) Brian Foley, our First VP. The other project is to update and improve our website. CSM (Ret) Ric Alcantara, our VP Communications, is leading this effort. We sought outside experts to help with both projects.

Brian Foley assisted me with review of the official documents for the past several months during which time they have also been reviewed by our other officers. We have obtained a local law firm to guide and assist us through the process to ensure that our documents reflect our current make-up and that we are compliant with all legal requirements of both the District of Columbia where we started and the State of Maryland where our office is now located. There are also questions about interstate commerce as we sell items via our website to persons in other states.

Ric Alcantara has taken a complete look at the website to make it more user friendly and compatible with today's world where almost everyone accesses the internet via their cell phone. Our website had not been updated in more than 10 years which as you know in today's hyper-electronic age is an eon or two. Everything needs to be updated. We want to: add more information and images about assistance provided to patients, families and WRNMMC and ATAMMC staff; enhance the shopping experience for Society memorabilia to make it similar to commercial sites with seamless ease and a consistent check out "cart" to handle multiple purchases at a time. Ric has put a lot of energy and effort into this work and hopefully our new site will be up and running soon. Maybe even before you read this.

I am very pleased Tansill Johnson agreed to be the Society's director of public relations, a new volunteer position. She had a long and very distinguished career as a Department of the Army civilian serving as the Army Surgeon General's first full-time Public Affairs Officer, and later as the Department of the Army's Chief of Community Relations. She also served as the Army's Chief of Command Information responsible for Soldiers magazine, Soldiers Radio and Television, Army Hometown News Service, and the Army News Service. Welcome Tansill.

I hope to see you at our **Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at the American Legion Post 41 in Silver Spring, MD.**



MORE WRS ANNUAL EVENT INFORMATION AND DETAILS ON PAGE 2



Issue 25

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WRS ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday
May 5, 2024
11:30 AM - 2 PM

****Cissel-Saxon****

American Legion Post 41

905 Sligo Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Brunch ~ \$30 per person

Mail checks to:
Walter Reed Society
8901 Rockville Pike
Box 303

Bethesda, MD 20889
or

pay in-person at door

*****RSVP by 4/17*****

support@walterreedsociety.org
301-571-1580

Entrance is located in the back of
building via parking lot at
8110 Fenton Drive

The Annual Meeting is our business meeting and one of two yearly membership meetings — the other is during the Holiday Season.

Member guests from last year's annual meeting:

Olivia and Robert Rodriguez (photo right) center, far right with WRS President John Pierce (left).



Dr. Delores Parron-Ragland and COL Sherman Ragland (photo left)

AHIMA FOUNDATION VETERAN SCHOLARSHIPS

The 2024 AHIMA Foundation Veteran Scholarship application process is open **March 1st thru May 31st**. Winners will be announced by **August 15th**. Scholarships are for members of the military and Uniformed Services. Specifically: spouses of active-duty military and uniformed services; veterans and their spouses; wounded warriors; and their spouses, and surviving spouses. **WRS will sponsor the cost of AHIMA student memberships for interested veterans and spouses of veterans.**

More information on the scholarship can be found on the AHIMA website: <https://ahimafoundation.org/programs-partnerships/education/scholarships/>

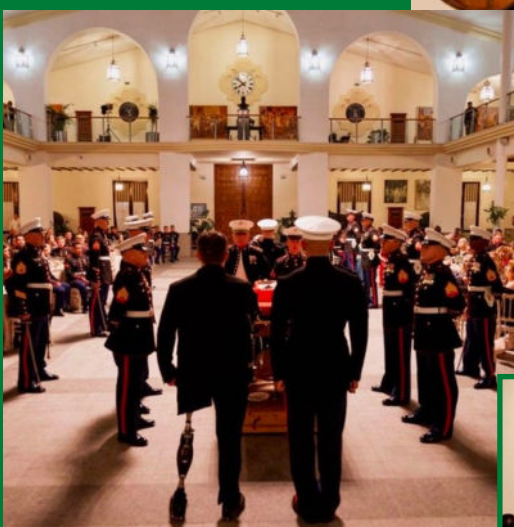


USMC Lt Col Paige Thomas with daughter Paisley and son Major are with COL (R) John Pierce at the WRS Holiday Gathering in Dec 2023. The Society has provided assistance for Paisley who required bilateral above the knee amputation because of extremely rare congenital anomalies.

Walter Reed Society, Inc.

WHEN VALOR SPEAKS...

The WRS provided support for a wounded Marine to travel to Rota Spain to be the Guest of Honor / Keynote Speaker at the USMC Europe FAST Company Marine Corps Ball. This unusual request came from a local Marine Corps Group after they had been unable to obtain funding elsewhere. The Marine was stationed in Afghanistan during the withdrawal of the United States and was wounded by the suicide bomber. During that evacuation, his physical injuries included the loss of a leg and arm. He was treated at WRN-MMC. He also recently testified before Congress investigating the US withdrawal. WRS received a thank you note and follow-up from the Executive Officer of FAST Company Europe USMC.



WRS Supports Cooking Clinics



During 2023 the WRS sponsored cooking clinics with Chef Egg partnering with the Navy Wounded Warrior's Military Adaptive Sports Program to provide funding for cooking ingredients and supplies supporting a cooking clinic instructed by Erik Berlin, also known as "Chef Egg." The event held at the USO on base was a reconditioning and therapeutic opportunity for local recovering service members. Accompanying images are from this event. The WRS also supported another Chef Egg event for the Partial Hospitalization Program within Directorate of Behavioral Health. This event targeted cooking instructions for patients recovering from trauma who also displayed mental health symptoms.



Walter Reed Society, Inc.

— SERVICE IN ACTION —

A VISIT TO FISHER HOUSE



WRS members COLs (R) Rick Ertdmann, John Pierce (photo left) and LTC (R) John Wetterau (far right) present a check to Fisher House Walter Reed Assistant Director Tyler Davis to provide support for families staying at the Fisher Houses during the 2023 Holiday Season.

MOBILITY ON WHEELS

Two wheelchair recipients share their appreciation.

My wheelchair arrived and it's...beautiful...a huge thanks to the Walter Reed Society! I have attached a picture of the chair so you can all see it! God bless you all...BH



"Many thanks!"
Thank you so much
for the ability to be
active with my family
again!
Sincerely,



WRS provided a motorized wheelchair for VW who was separated from active duty because of a connective tissue condition known as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.



HAPPINESS IS...OPERATION KEY WEST

In 2023 the Walter Reed Society partnered with Operation Key West to provide a quarterly get together for the chronically ill children and families of Portsmouth Naval Medical Center in Virginia. The image pictured left shows the children that participated in the last quarterly party of 2023 at Dave and Busters in Portsmouth. The smiles on their faces tell it all.

Jimmy McGonigle started Operation Key West a number of years ago to provide a respite for military families that had lost a child. His efforts were assisted by LTG Ron Blanck (Ret) former Army Surgeon General and VADM Harold Koenig (Ret) former Navy Surgeon General. Unfortunately the pandemic severely limited travel and OKW had to look for another opportunity to provide assistance to military families.

OKW found this opportunity at Portsmouth Naval Medical Center in Virginia where they launched a program sponsoring a quarterly party for pediatric oncology patients and their families. It was so successful it expanded to include all chronically ill pediatric patients. One of the unique aspects of the program is that they reach out to all the siblings in the family so they will not feel left out. As mentioned, WRS partnered with them in 2023 and will do so again in 2024.

Walter Reed Society, Inc.

— MEET AND GREETs —

WRS Meets with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Leadership



Photo by Hermalene M. Taylor

Left to Right: COL (R) Rick Erdtmann, COL (R) John Pierce, CAPT Melissa C. Austin, Director, SGM Dennis Waycaster, Senior Enlisted Leader and LTC (R) John Wetterau

WRS Meets with Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center Leadership



Left to Right: COL Elba Villacorta, COL (R) John Pierce, Ms. Clarice Gross, COL (R) Rick Erdtmann and CSM Dedraf Blash, Senior Enlisted Leader

A NOTE OF CHEER FOR DAV HOLIDAY DINNER

WRS hosted soldiers and families from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Night Out Program at American Legion Post 41. The December holiday gathering was attended by 75 adults and 14 children.

"On behalf of DAV we wish to thank the American Legion Post 41 and Walter Reed Society for sponsoring and hosting the delightful dinner on Friday,



December 15, 2023. All the patients, caregivers and families from the Fort Belvoir Soldier Recovery Unit and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center had a wonderful time.

The dinner was a huge hit last week, and folks spoke about it the entire way back to the base! The Friday night dinner was a tremendous hit, everyone

truly had a spectacular time and a lot of fun."



Note to WRS Board Member and Post 41 Commander Dan Bullis from Justin Hart, Danny Sotoo and Shaunise Stewart



Issue 25

IMPACT IN ACTION — WRS 2023

In December, WRS President John Pierce compiled a detailed narrative summarizing the Society's impact in 2023. Written for the WRS community, he chronicles a tapestry of real stories that shares our humanity. How the Society works, responds, and serves military members and families; and the places and people that we support to meet needs. Highlights of some are spotlighted here. We encourage you to read the full report on our website: www.walterreedsociety.org

SUMMARY OF ASSISTANCE

WRNMMC and National Capital Region (NCR) grants supported and provided:

- ♦ a safety bed, recommended by clinical staff—referred to as a "Cubby Bed"—for an 8 year old child of a Navy E-5 diagnosed with severe global developmental delay, epilepsy and autism. TRICARE denied the request. (via a Pediatric Mobility Clinic nurse /Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation).
- ♦ medical care recommended by providers for the family of a child born with an extremely rare medical condition requiring multiple surgeries. Non-TRICARE covered treatment.
- ♦ assistance for the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation in their donation of a 24 inch maquette of the Vietnam Women's Memorial to WRNMMC; and purchased a pedestal and plaque for the display in a prominent location in the hospital.
- ♦ a family in need of a **monthly grant for several months**. A medically retired patient after a full career in the artillery received expenses for rent, utilities, cell, gas, incidentals.

Diagnosed with an aggressive cancer of his jaw, tongue and mouth. He had surgery, feeding tube, tracheotomy, radiation, and chemotherapy. Unable to speak or eat, his spouse assisted him at the hospital and received training in tube feeding and tracheotomy care. Following a poor prognosis at re-evaluation, very sadly the patient chose to end his life. (via a MATC Case Manager).

- ♦ a local ROTC instructor, partner, 3 children and dog to attend family funeral in Georgia. They have a financial hardship to travel—no savings and no relatives in Georgia. Approved support for a \$500 grant and vehicle transportation costs large enough for all family members to attend funeral. (via the Ft Detrick AER office).
- ♦ home wheelchair accessibility for a ten year Navy member terminally ill, diagnosed with glioblastoma. Treated at WRNMMC—with travel to and from hospital. Rental option for ramp provided this support until the patient's death. (via a case manager at the MATC).
- ♦ four funded Wounded Warrior dinners during



the year at American Legion Post 41.

- ♦ **one time grant** for an active duty member in an outpatient program for PTSD related to sexual trauma. An AMEDD FOR 7 years as a 68W combat medic, she was accepted into the Occupation Therapist Course while assigned in Korea and sent TDY to Ft Sam for phase 1 with follow-on at WR. Incident occurred while attending the course. Unable to focus, removed from course and placed on attached status at WR.
- ♦ taxi vouchers for support for patients brought and had no way to get back home or were transported from WRNMMC to ATAMMC via ambulance and had no way to get back to their POV at WRNMMC. (via ambulance to the ER at WRNMMC or ATAMMC).
- ♦ deposit and the first month's rent for house fire victims—active duty member's rented townhouse and all of the family's belongings destroyed. Two grandchildren (along with them until December) moved to a local hotel. Red Cross helped (with stay in a local hotel) and the AER (granted uniforms and clothing). Found a place to rent just in time before the holidays. (AER office at Ft. Detrick).
- ♦ a Specialist 4 assigned to Ft Belvoir with assistance needed for she and her sister to travel to Hartford, CT to bid farewell to their Dad. Her dependent sister resides with her and neither had funds or credit cards. Assistance included travel, car rental, lodging, incidentals and some burial costs. (via the Ft Belvoir AER office).
- ♦ assistance to a medically retired Army E-4 with car repairs. After 6 years of service, the soldier was discharged with PTSD. He was employed until his medications changed. Married with three children, his spouse is unable to work as child care costs exceeds her income. (via the Army Emergency Relief).
- ♦ Mental Health Initiative and Research Symposium — May 2023.
- ♦ "Spring into MHS Genesis" event.
- ♦ Human Research Protections Program Symposium.
- ♦ Patient and Family Partnership Council — refreshments for regular meetings.

(continued on next page)

Issue 25

IMPACT IN ACTION — WRS 2023

- ◆ Celebration for 10 Year anniversary of the Intrepid Spirit Center with a ceremony and reception.
- ◆ families of pediatric patients hospitalized during the 2023 Holidays.
- ◆ **one time grant** to assist a widow of a service member who is being treated at MATC cover a co-pay for a wheelchair needed from vehicle incident— arm amputation and leg injury. TRICARE covered part of cost.
- ◆ occupational therapy/low vision department for assistance for a spouse of a retired member who has been diagnosed with macular degeneration of both eyes. Her eyesight is seriously failing and she needs special glasses.
- ◆ assistance with the re-naming ceremony of the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital to the Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center (ATAMMC).
- ◆ purchase of eight new massage chairs for ATAMMC at Ft. Belvoir to replace the ones we provided for them several years ago. These chairs were heavily used by patients and staff to the point of being worn-out.
- ◆ **a monthly grant** for the mother of an active duty Marine stationed in Korea who suffered a medical emergency while running. It was discovered he had a cancerous tumor that invaded his brain stem. He arrived at WRNMMC in August. His mom, who is a single parent, drove here to be with him. He's had surgery that resulted in paralysis on his left side and started 30 daily radiation treatments. The patient's sister remained at home with neighbors checking in on her while working and attending school. The Marine and his mother will likely be here for several months with an ongoing need. We continue to monitor the patient's condition and her need to remain with him.
- ◆ FBCH Spring Ball— purchased 20 tickets for E4/ GS5/6 and below. When other planned support fell through — provided grant funds for ball's Speaker.
- ◆ Portable Video Display unit for the third floor MRI Suite — assisted Mission M4 with its donation.
- ◆ Professional development event in March 2023.
- ◆ Graduate Medical Education's office Thank A Resident day.
- ◆ Commissary gift cards during the Holiday Season purchased for enlisted personnel.
- ◆ Mental Health Month Initiative — production of a suicide prevention video.
- ◆ Two-year subscription to the Predictive Index Software to assist WRNMMC leaders in improving their management style.
- ◆ **WRS Assistance to Other Non-profits**
- ◆ Fisher Houses Bethesda to purchase supplies needed for families staying at the residences.
- ◆ Wreaths Across America to sponsor about 58 wreaths for placement in a local veterans' cemetery.
- ◆ WRNMMC USO with funds to support a cooking clinic with Chef Egg.
- ◆ Community Building Art Works grant to support their special event in August, "Day of Belonging."
- ◆ American Red Cross to provide 25 Inner Balance Bluetooth devices for Android and iPhones to teach shift from stress and frustration to balance and resiliency.
- ◆ Oakleaf Club of Greater Washington DC's Pediatric Stuffed Animal Program for purchase of stuffed animals and toys in partnership with Gund, the toymaker. The Oakleaf Club has an established relationship with Gund—they receive the products at wholesale prices.
- ◆ In cooperation with American Red Cross — sponsors of the Rose Mologne Award given to an outstanding Red Cross Volunteer at WRNMMC. WRS provided an engraved crystal rose bud vase and made a donation to ARC in the recipient's name.
- ◆ Grant to the local chapter of Blue Star Families.
- ◆ Funds for quarterly events hosted by Operation Key West for pediatric patients at the Portsmouth Naval Medical Center.



WRS SUMMARY OF ASSISTANCE 2023



To read full report, visit the WRS website/News page:

www.walterreedsociety.org

or scan the QR code below to visit WRS website page:





WALTER REED SOCIETY, INC.
8901 Rockville Pike, Box 303
Bethesda, MD 20889
Phone: 301-571-1580
www.walterreedsociety.org

MEMBERSHIP CONNECTIONS: We continue to develop an electronic mailing list of our membership. Please share your email address and indicate interest in receiving our newsletter electronically.

ARE YOU A WRS MEMBER? ANNUAL - \$25; TWO YEAR - \$40; FIVE YEAR - \$100; LIFETIME - \$500

#38118 

WRS ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday
MAY 5, 2024
11:30 AM - 2 PM

SEE
DETAILS
ON
PAGE 2

CISSEL-SAXON
AMERICAN LEGION POST 41
905 Sligo Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
post41.org

COMING
SOON!

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH:

IT'S COUNTDOWN...WE'RE ABOUT
TO GO LIVE!

WHEN WE DO, WE WANT **YOU** TO BE THE
FIRST TO KNOW.

SEND US YOUR NAME AND CURRENT EMAIL
ADDRESS AND YOU WILL RECEIVE OUR E-
BLAST ANNOUNCEMENT.

EMAIL US: SUPPORT@WALTERREEDSOCIETY.ORG

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!



DIRECTIONS — Post 41 bldg. parking
and entry location on Fenton Street.
Point smart phone camera at code.

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