



Lewis & Clark Chapter

TRI-CITIES, WASHINGTON



April 2026

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Crash landing in China

On April 1, 2001, a Chinese fighter jet collided with a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance plane over the South China, killing the Chinese pilot and forcing the EP-3 to make an emergency landing in China. The EP-3 was flying over the South China Sea at a point roughly midway between Hainan Island and the Paracel Islands. The EP-3 was forced to make an emergency landing on Hainan without permission from the PRC, and its 24 crew members were detained and interrogated by Chinese authorities. This led to a 10-day international incident. The incident occurred ten weeks after George W. Bush's



BGen Sealock, USA (Ret)

What went on behind the scenes? For answers, come to the April 21 meeting, where our speaker, Brigadier General (Ret) Gratton O'Neal

Sealock II will describe the negotiations to release the aircrew

Neal graduated from Eastern Washington University where he was in the ROTC program and was commissioned in the Army in 1972. Neal served tours as Defense Attaché in Canberra, Australia, as well as Hong Kong and Beijing, China and is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

On April 1st, 2001 a Chinese Navy fighter aircraft collided with a US Navy EP3 reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea. The EP3 sustained control damage and made an emergency landing on Hainan Island. The Chinese fighter crashed. During the following weeks Neal, as the Defense Attaché to China, negotiated the release of the 24 US Navy aircrew.

During Neal's 31 years in the Army, he flew both helicopters and airplanes. He is a Cobra pilot by trade; he was a Company Commander at Ft. Rucker, AL and an instructor pilot. Neal served tours as Defense Attaché in Canberra, Australia, as well as Hong Kong and Beijing. Prior to retirement Neal served as the deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Cadet Command, Ft Monroe, Virginia.

After retiring from the Army he has been CEO of the Spokane International Airport and has also



Marines dispose of trash in a burn pit in Khan Neshin Afghanistan in 2012. (Photo: US Marine Corps)

been an adjunct professor at Whitworth College. Currently Neal and his wife Donna live in Spokane and have two adult sons. One is a Major in the US Army, and one is an accomplished Unmanned Aerial System) pilot.

Mark your calendar now for this fascinating presentation—and let Bob Allen know you are attending.

HQ MOAA sends . . . Servicemembers Can Track

Their Exposure History; Veteran Access Coming Soon

Active duty service members now can access their file in the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER), a database launched in 2019 that tracks potential exposures to environmental hazards based on all types of deployment and assignment information. The VA is expected to offer similar access and self-reporting procedures in the fall.

The database provides full information on exposure history for service members and veterans throughout their careers.

Membership Renewal

Because of some extensive vacation travel by Bob and Paul (no apologies), we’ve fallen behind on tracking membership renewals. Watch for an email from Bob in the near future to those who haven’t renewed.

Zintel Creek
314 N Underwood St
Kennewick

Social hour: 5:00
Dinner: 6:00
\$30 per person members
\$35 per person on the web

A reservation made is a reservation paid

April Meeting
Tuesday, April 21

Reservations by
Thursday, Apr 16 to
Email:
moaa.tricities@gmail.com
On line:
<http://www.tricitiesmoaa.org>

Menu

Tri-tip
Roasted red potatoes
Steamed vegetables
Garden green salad
Rolls
Desert
Beverages