



Greetings All

The Greater Utica Rome Military Officers Association of America Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance dinner meeting and elections will be held on **Sunday December 6, 2015** at the **Delta Lake Inn** on Fish Hatchery Road in Rome from 1300 to 1700.

Our **guest speaker** will be

Col. Philip M. Odom, USAF (Ret)



Odom served 27 years of active service in personnel and training. He was a personnel officer during his entire military career and saw duty in a variety of jobs, including two overseas tours, a squadron command, two tours at the Air Force Personnel Center, and two tours at HQ USAF.

For the last five years of active service, he was engaged in developing and implementing force shaping policy.

Odom was raised in Washington, D.C., attended college in New England, served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines, and was a legislative researcher prior to joining the Air Force. He has a bachelor's degree in political science, a Master of Public Administration from the University of New Hampshire, and a master's degree in strategic studies.

Odom joined MOAA's Government Relations team in April 2007, and his focus is on retiree and survivor benefits.

Positions Held at MOAA:

- Deputy Director, Government Relations

By popular demand we are having the same wonderful buffet dinner as last year. Dinner will include:

- Grilled Steak Portobello
- Chicken Francaise
- Broiled Haddock Oreganato
- Mashed Potatoes & Vegetable Medley
- Rolls and butter
- Fresh Garden Salad w/dressing
- Red or White wine with dinner
- Coffee or tea and Dessert

If you are one of the lucky ones whose uniform hasn't shrunk, please wear it. Mess Dress, Class 'A' or Jacket and tie are required. Cost is ONLY \$32.00 per person (\$23.00 Active Duty), and guests are welcome. The dinner will also be open to the public. Note: price includes buffet meal listed above and gratuity.

Schedule: **1300-1400 Attitude Adjustment**
 1400-1500 Ceremonies/Guest Speaker
 1500-1700 Dinner & Entertainment

Since we expect a large turnout, please, **PAID reservations** are requested as soon as possible and on or before **Wednesday, Dec. 2nd**, to ensure seating. When completing the reservation form in this newsletter, specify the total number of people in your party.

Bring Family & Friends

Our members and especially new members are encouraged to bring family and friends to our fun gathering. It's an excellent time to introduce new members and their families. This is our premier event of the year and you should share it with those closest to you. Please sign them up. The more the merrier!

AFJROTC Color Guard Presents the Colors

The Color Guard from the **ROME FREE ACADEMY AIR FORCE JROTC** program will open our formal ceremonies. This is another opportunity for you to see firsthand what these cadets learn in the JROTC program. As GRUC-MOAA members, and as sponsors of these programs, you have the right to be proud of these cadets.

Recognizing Veterans

Of course, we are indebted to veterans of all of our wars. However, we especially want to recognize our members who are WW II and Korean War veterans. As the years pass, we want to let them know that their efforts were not in vain and that we will always remember their service and their sacrifice. Join us in our special salute to several WWII and Korean War soldiers who will be attending the dinner.

Gifts for Needy Children

Keep up the spirit of a GRUC-MOAA tradition by bringing a wrapped gift for a needy child or making a monetary donation to the House of Good Shepherd to be placed under the Christmas tree at the dinner. You can also include the donation along with your dinner reservation. Any member who is unable to attend the Annual Dinner, who wishes to donate a gift, please send it along with your annual dues. Last year over \$400 along with some gifts were donated to The House of the Good Shepherd that brought great joy to the recipients. Please remember the young children trying to adapt to the challenges this world puts before them.

NATIONAL MOAA 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual national meeting was held October 30 to November 1, 2015 at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Orlando Florida. Friday's night's "Community Heroes Award Dinner" keynote speaker was **Gen. Dennis L. Via, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Materiel Command**. The Master of Ceremonies at the dinner was **Lee**

Woodruff who is a contributing reporter for **CBS This Morning**. She is the coauthor of the best-selling **“In an Instant”** which documents her family’s journey to recovery following her husband Bob’s roadside bomb injury in Iraq. MOAA Awards were given to **Bonnie Carroll president and founder of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)**, Canine Companions For Independence, Fish With A Hero, Operation Helping Hand, The Wounded Warriors of South Florida, Heaven on Earth for Veterans, to name just a few of the noteworthy organizations assisting veterans and the families of our fallen heroes.

At the Saturday Luncheon, an excellent talk on the mission of the U.S. Special Operation Command was given by deputy commander Vice Adm. Sean Pybus (photo below). Could not be more proud to see our most important command in the war against terror and ISIS, in such good hands.



At the Saturday Evening Level of Excellence Awards Dinner, **Bob Haley** accepted the **Four Star Level of Excellence Award**. This is the second year in a row that GRUCMOAA has received this award and next year we’ll be gunning for the 5 Star Award. Photo below shows Bob receiving the Four Star Award from chair of MOAA’s board of directors Gen. Charles T. Robertson Jr. USAF (Ret)

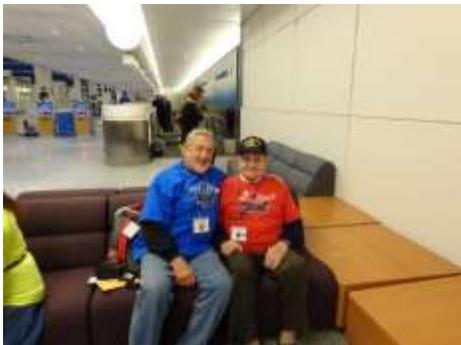


A lot of emphasis at the national conference was devoted to the retirement of MOAA President, Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan Jr. His leadership and inspiration will be missed.

“Honor Flights”

Two “Honor Flights” missions to the Washington, D.C. memorials took place this year from the Syracuse Airport. On the March flight, GRUCMOAA sponsored four local veterans.

For the October 3rd mission, **Bill Hamelin**, who was on the flight staff, provided the following photo and description.



Mission: 006 Honor Flight, Syracuse

The Greater Rome-Utica Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America sponsored Mr. Henry (Hank) Zysk, a decorated WWII Veteran in the European Theater, to participate in the Syracuse Honor Flight, Mission: 006, on 3 October, 2015. At approximately 0500 Mr. Zysk arrived at the Syracuse airport to process through the operations and registration desks to prepare for departure. The Honor Flight, US Air 9438, departed Syracuse Airport approximately 0930, with the goodwill and thanks of many local citizens present. Arrival at Washington, D.C. was approximately 1100. This time an Honor Reception with Fire Trucks and hoses blasting across the aircraft welcomed Mission: 006 to Reagan International Airport. All of the Honor Flight Veterans were given a very warm and well deserved welcome by a large group of citizens, thanking the Veterans in person for their service to the country. During the time in Washington Mr. Zysk had a dedicated “guardian”, Mr. Vinnie Cuevas, who throughout this flight provided full time assistance and friendship. Mr. Zysk visited the WWII Memorial, Korean Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, and the Tomb of the Unknown

Soldier. All of these Memorials are dedicated to those who have fought our Nation's battles. Mr. Zysk observed the reverence and dedication of those soldiers who maintain a 24hour, 7 day watch over this sacred location in Arlington National Cemetery. He observed the Guard on Watch, the Changing of the Guard Ceremony, and a Wreath Laying Ceremony. Mr. Zysk, and his fellow Veterans, returned to Reagan Airport and departed for "home" at approximately 1730 on Flight 9439. Upon arrival in Syracuse Airport an Honor Reception with Fire Trucks, hoses blazing across the aircraft, once again welcomed Mission: 006 participants home. Once the Veterans departed the aircraft they were treated to an airport filled with cheering and jubilant relatives, friends, fellow Veterans, Guard Units, Patriot Guards, Scottish Bands, a musical choir group, and everyday citizens. The airport was full from the arrival gate throughout the entire airport length, all the way until the final ceremony area. The Final Ceremony had a full slate of guest speakers who, each in turn, thanked our VIP Veterans for their selfless service during WWII. The final guest speaker was the Operations Officer for Syracuse Honor Flight, Mr. Mike Gasapo, who gave the final order of the day, "to all of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines,Mission: 006 has been successfully completed, you are hereby dismissed!"

Remembering, Honoring, our Veterans over the Holidays



Again this year the chapter will be organizing ceremonies to place holiday wreaths on the graves of veterans. This is being done in conjunction with the national Wreaths

Across America program which will be placing wreaths at 12 noon Saturday Dec. 12th, on graves at Arlington and over 1,000 other cemeteries and memorials throughout the U.S.

In Rome, wreaths will be placed at the Rome Cemetery on Jervis Ave. Here Civil War Veterans will be honored as well as veterans from other wars. Taking part at this cemetery will be a choral group from RFA as well as State Senator Joseph Griffo. Soldiers from the Eastern Air Defense Sector (EADS) will be a key part of the ceremony.

Also in Rome, wreaths will be placed on veteran's graves at the St. Mary's and St. Peter's Cemeteries. At St. Mary's the Mayor of Rome and a choral group from Gansevoort School will take part. At St. Peter's we hope to have US Representative Richard Hanna and a choral group of students from Bellamy school take part.

Also this year, wreaths will be placed on Veterans Graves at the Westernville Presbyterian Cemetery. The Western Legion Post 1846 and its Ladies Auxiliary have agreed to conduct the ceremony.

All four locations will have a short ceremony where they will be placing seven ceremonial wreaths (the five services, POW/MIA, and Merchant Marines) followed by "Taps" and a gun salute. Taking part in these ceremonies will be the Rome and Western American Legions, soldiers from EADS and the Utica Armory, cadets from the RFA AFJROTC and Proctor NJROTC, Rome area Boy and Girl Scouts, Rome's VFW, and volunteers from the community.

The aim of this event is to get the community involved with honoring our veterans. Even more important is the education of our young people about the sacrifices of our veterans, which has made the U.S. what it is today.

How can we help? We can help by volunteering and attending the ceremonies, and by sponsoring wreaths at \$15 each with \$5 of that going back to our chapter. Last year \$2,395 was raised for our chapter when some 900 wreaths were placed. This year so far we have exceeded that total by nearly \$1,000, as Rome area businesses have come up big for our veterans. For those wishing to sponsor some wreaths, a line on the dinner reservation form will allow you to include the donation with your dinner reservation. Checks for the wreaths are to be made out to **Wreaths Across America**. If you're not attending Pearl Harbor Day Dinner, then you may include your donation with the annual dues. To volunteer for the ceremonies call Bob Haley at 336-4220, e-mail him at lakeeffect2@verizon.net, or just show up. If we are going to place over 800 wreaths, we will need volunteers. It may be cold and snowy, but we like to remind people that some of our deceased veterans, whose graves we will place wreaths on, fought at the Battle

of the Bulge and in the Northern Italy mountains during the winter. Check our website www.GRUCMOAA.org (Community Support) for further information on this initiative.

AFJROTC Basket Raffles

The RFA Junior ROTC unit is holding its large fund-raiser later this fall . . . they need our support. These 'Basket Raffles' are a great way to assist the units . . . visit with fellow MOAA members along with the cadets and instructors . . . and win 'Holiday Gift Baskets' during the raffle. The RFA raffle is on November 22nd 12 noon to 5:00 PM in both the Large and Small Cafeterias.

October 3, 2015 Wreath laying at the Veteran's Park in Rome



Photo above shows two representatives of the Fort Stanwix Chapter of NSDAR viewing the ceremonial wreath provided by GRUCMOAA, for the event.

There were about 50-75 people attending. The Mayor of Rome, Joseph Fusco was Master of Ceremonies. NYS Senator Joe Griffo and NYS Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi were present. They had the 8th grade chorus from one of Rome's schools there singing. The RFA and Proctor NJROTCs were present as color guards. The main portion of the event was the solemn reading of all the names of Oneida County's Vietnam KIA – the names being read by one cadet from each school along with other veteran leaders. They rang a bell in between each name. Taps was played, along with a bag piper. The overall theme was remembering the dead and the sacrifices they made for our country. Thanks goes out to **CDR Rob Piper** for this account of the proceedings.

Annual Dues . . . \$20 for Members / \$10 for Auxiliary Members and Serving Military

Do you remember the introduction “Like grains of sand through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives”? Well, it’s true; it’s time to renew your membership dues for 2016. A dues statement is included with this newsletter, please update any information that is missing or has changed and submit your dues statement with payment to our Treasurer, Bob Haley who continues to hold down two jobs in our chapter. However, next year only one as Joe Maurer takes over the leadership role. GRUC-MOAA dues are minimal, but they are necessary to offset our limited administrative expenses, and provide funding for all three local area JROTC units to support Student Scholarships, attendance at leadership training programs, and drill meet awards. If you owe dues for prior years, please consider a “catch-up” payment to bring your dues current for 2016.

One last thought, Emphasis was given to MOAA’s motto at the national conference, **“NEVER STOP SERVING”**. A good one for GRUCMOAA would be **“IF IT NEEDS TO BE DONE, I’LL DO IT”**

Take Care!

Bob Haley

Lakeeffect2@verizon.net

Greater Rome Utica Chapter of Military Officers Association of America
P. O. Box 36
Rome, NY 13442-0036

www.GRUCMOAA.org



***Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner
Reservation
Sunday, December 6, 2015***

RSVP by Wednesday 2 , December , 2015

Please return your dinner reservation check, dues payment check, House of Good Shepherd donation check, all payable to GRUC – MOAA; and any Wreath donation check made payable to Wreath Across America, to **Bob Haley, GRUC-MOAA Treasurer, P.O. Box 36, Rome, New York 13442-0036**

Name: _____

Number of Guests: _____

Guest Names: _____

Total Dinners: _____ @ \$ 32.00 per person* = \$ _____

*\$23.00 per person for **Active Duty Military**

Holiday Wreaths for a Veteran Gravesite @ \$15 each = \$ _____ Make wreaths checks payable to Wreaths Across America

2016 DUES STATEMENT

Please renew your 2016 membership by December 12, 2015 by sending your check, payable to GRUC – MOAA, to Treasurer Bob Haley at P.O. Box 36, Rome, New York 13442-0036

* Indicates Required Information

* Name: _____ * Rank: _____

* Address: _____

Occupation: _____ Service Branch: _____

* Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: (____) ____ - ____

Spouse's First Name: _____ *E-mail: _____

Dues Enclosed: _____ \$ 20.00 Regular Member

_____ \$ 10.00 Active Duty / Guard / Reserve

_____ \$ 10.00 Auxiliary Member – Widow/Widower of a member or qualifying individual

_____ \$ 5.00 Auxiliary Member – Non-attende*

*Non –attende membership status is for our homebound and nursing home members or those living more than 50 miles away

Your Dues are paid up to: _____ Past Year(s) Dues \$ _____

Total Dues Enclosed \$ _____.

Total Dinner and Dues Enclosed: \$ _____

PHOTOS FROM MONTHLY DINNERS



RECOGNIZE ANYONE?