



2019 ACHIEVEMENTS AND 2020 GOALS

President Joe Maurer

Greetings!

As we near the end to another great year of operations for our chapter, I want to thank you for your continued loyal support and commitment to our mission. Because of you, we have achieved many successes in 2019.

2019 Achievements

We have continued to meet success in supporting our three JROTC detachments and our NNDCC unit. Our Chapter has also assisted fellow veterans in the Rome Marine Corps Association, the Rome Veterans Council and the Viet Nam Veterans' Association with their programs and fundraisers. We have helped recruit and fund more area vets for trips to Washington, DC on Honor Flight Syracuse. Under the direction of our team lead, Bill Hamelin, we continue our stellar support of our local veterans who rely on The Donald Mitchell VA Clinic at Griffiss Business Park for their health and welfare needs.

A Five Star Chapter, Again!

On September 25th at the NY State Council of Chapters Annual Awards Dinner Meeting in Fishkill, I was joined by our Past Chapter President, Major Jim Tille, in accepting our Chapter's Five Star Level of Excellence for 2018. As a small chapter, we perform better than most chapters nationally, regardless of membership size. Thanks goes to you, our members, for supporting your Chapter leaders by paying your dues, attending our membership meetings and pitching in when help is needed.

Annual Meeting and Dinner

On Sunday, November 10th, 1300 – 1700 hrs., we will meet at DiCastro's Too for our Annual Meeting and Dinner. This is a big change but one your Board of Directors considered carefully. While all of us revere Pearl Harbor Day, over the years it has become increasingly difficult to get WW II veterans to attend as guests; also, having the event a month earlier allows for improved attendance because of the chance for better weather and avoidance of the crowded December holiday schedule. I hope to see a good turnout to celebrate our successes and each other!

Robert Michael Haley, LCDR, USN (Ret)

On Tuesday, September 24th in St. Peter's Church, Rome, we celebrated the life of an outstanding American, our Treasurer and Past President, Bob Haley. Several of our members were in attendance. It was my honor to be invited by Chip to give a eulogy on behalf of the Chapter for Bob.

One little story tells a lot about this humble man: Bob was awarded the Silver Star in Viet Nam. He never told anyone, no one, not even his family. We found out about the award the day before his funeral from his DD Form 214. Bob never told you what he did – only what he was going to do. Rest in peace, Bob.

Wreaths Across America

It won't be easy without Bob, but we're going to carry on the mission of Wreaths Across America in Rome, NY. That's what Bob would like, right? This year WAA ceremonies will be held at 12 Noon, Saturday, December 14th in five Rome cemeteries. Our goal is to have at least 1,000 wreaths placed at the graves of our deceased brother and sister veterans. This is a great community event which involves a lot of young people. Because of our sponsorship of WAA, we're able to accomplish what few other chapters can do.

To enjoy continued success with this program, we need members to step up and support this program either as a volunteer for fundraising or to purchase wreaths when you send in your reservation to the Annual Dinner or anytime by mailing your check to our post office box. Volunteers are also needed on the day of the event at any of the cemeteries (St. John's, St. Mary's and St. Peter's and Evergreen and Westernville cemeteries) to help with wreath distribution.

Chapter Leadership

As we proceed into a new year, I would like every member to consider stepping up and offer to share the work load. The future viability of the Chapter depends on more active involvement by more individuals. We need new faces in the functional roles so no one person is performing multiple tasks year after year. It's not difficult to be the Secretary but it is when you're also the Webmaster and the Co-Treasurer. Our longevity as an organization is in peril if we do not have more participation. We need volunteers to step up and fill our Treasurer and a Secretary positions.

I hope to see all of you at DiCastro's Too on November 10th.

Thank you again for your support.

Joe

TREASURER'S REPORT

Co-Treasurers Joe Maurer & Greg Bertolini

ANNUAL RESULTS – January 2019

Income less Disbursements plus Beginning Balance = Balance in January 2019

\$7,742.50 - \$9,122.12 + \$10,771.60 = \$9,391.98

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Co-chairs Tony Kimball and Bill Gray, Jr.

■ Congressional District 22 Updates ([CTRL](#) and [Click to follow underlined links](#))

WORKING FOR WOMEN VETERANS: Women comprise nearly 10% of the Veteran population, and that number is expected to double in the next 20 years. However, 75% of women Veterans do not use VA health care and are nearly twice as likely to die by suicide as civilian women. It's clear that women Veterans face a number of inequalities in a system that simply hasn't been adjusted quickly enough to meet their specific needs. Rep. Brindisi introduced a bill to direct the VA to make information and materials for women Veterans more accessible and ensure the Women Veterans' Crisis Line can receive text messages from Veterans in need. Watch our hearing HERE.

CARE FOR RESERVISTS: While the VA has done a better job of increasing awareness about Veteran mental health and suicide, it is clear we must do more to make sure every American who has worn a uniform has access to the mental health resources he or she needs. Because they often don't live near military installations, many members of the National Guard and Reserves struggle to access mental health resources. As a result, the rate of suicide for National Guard members and Reservists is consistently higher than the rate for civilians and active duty servicemembers. That's why Rep. Brindisi introduced the **Care and Readiness Enhancement (CARE) for Reservists Act** to expand mental health services to National Guard members and Reservists. Rep. Brindisi will keep working with the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to ensure all our servicemembers have access to the care they earned. Watch our committee hearing [HERE](#).

WELCOME HOME: So many Upstate Vietnam Era Veterans had to wait far too long to hear "welcome home." It was an honor to meet American heroes at our pinning ceremony in Wampsville and recognize them for their bravery and service to our country.

KEEPING PROMISES TO OUR VETERANS: Mohawk Valley Veterans were able to use the Colosseum Gym at Griffiss Air Force Base until a technicality forced them out in 2013. Rep. Brindisi's office has heard from many Veterans and their families who benefitted from the facility - using the gym as a place to connect with fellow Veterans and lead a healthy lifestyle. Rep. Brindisi urged Major General William Cooley, Commander of the Air Force Research Laboratory, to allow Veterans access to this important resource. *Editors Note: This issue was raised to Rep. Hanna and Rep. Tenney with no action taken.*

A HELPING HOOF: Our Veterans sacrificed so much to keep us safe, and Spirit Dogs Farm in Frankfort is helping Upstate Veterans with their equine therapy program. Rep. Brindisi met Veterans and their horses and learned more about how they use this therapy to improve their mental health.

GRUCMOAA Involvement:

GRUCMOAA has three (3) chapter members on Congressman Brindisi's (NY22 Congressional Representative) Military Advisory Committee. Rep. Brindisi's last meeting

was held on 7/22/19. Some of the issues discussed were Blue Water Navy veterans, full SBP/DIC for surviving spouses, military transition process, and the MISSION ACT. The meeting was held in conjunction with a Veterans Resource Fair at HCCC.

■ **MOAA Updates (CTRL and Click to follow underlined links)**

[VA May Owe Veterans Billions for Denied ER Bills](#)

Veterans Affairs has been overruled, again, on its interpretation of its own reimbursement policies.

[Lawmakers Prepare to Finalize Defense Authorization Bill](#)

Tell Congress to support MOAA's legislative priorities, including putting a stop to a proposed cut in up to 18,000 medical billets and ending the widows' tax

[COLA Watch: Get the Latest Update](#)

The August numbers are out, showing a slight dip.

[MOAA Board Member Calls on Congress to End the Widows Tax](#)

The latest commentary from Rear Adm. Tom Jurkowsky, USN (Ret), appeared in The Capital newspaper of Annapolis, Md.

■ **New York State Comptroller**

Technology is Changing How Local Governments Serve Residents: Local governments across New York State are turning to new technologies to save money, to communicate with residents and to allow taxpayers to make payments, according to a report released this week by DiNapoli's office.

The report notes that a growing number of New York's municipalities allow homeowners to pay online for their property taxes and other municipal bills, such as water, sewer and parking tickets. Some cities, towns and villages are also offering interactive online communication, allowing residents to directly make service requests or report code violations.

Many municipalities have replaced traditional coin operated parking meters with electronic parking meters, improving service to customers as well as streamlining parking administration. Other municipalities have been replacing street lights with cost- and energy- saving LEDs.

Other smart technologies used by local governments across the state include:

- Drones used by police, sheriff and fire departments to assess damage from floods and natural disasters, to monitor construction and to inspect infrastructure in remote areas.
- Advanced water sensors to detect leaks or broken lines and better meters for more accurate reading and billing.
- Interactive school technologies, including:
 - Parent portals providing grades, assignments and communication with teachers;
 - Notification systems that send urgent information via text or email; and
 - Document sharing programs that enable students to work together and submit assignments online.

Comptroller DiNapoli hopes you find this [report](#) informative. For questions, please contact Deputy Comptroller for the Division of Local Governments and School Accountability [Elliott Auerbach](#) at 518-474-4037.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Director Bill Hamelin

Our chapter has 61 paid members. 28 current paid members, 19 current life members, 3 paid aux members, 4 current life aux members, 10 new members, 5 honorary members, and 6 non-members, with 2 members overdue for 2019. Bill will be sending out periodic reminders for those still overdue for 2019. The 2020 membership form is enclosed. Please complete the 2020 membership form and return it with payment. You can also renew by visiting the GRUCMOAA web page:

http://grucmoaa.org/html/join_gruc.html to join online and use a credit card for payment.

If you aren't a National MOAA member, it's highly recommended that you become a member, please go to the MOAA website at:

https://ebiz.moaa.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Default.aspx?TabId=153&utm_source=hp&utm_medium=header&utm_campaign=Join

Any questions regarding GRUC MOAA membership, please contact Bill for assistance, 315-725-3362.

VA ROME COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC Director Bill Hamelin

Chapter members Joe Maurer, Steve Mercurio, Monica Mercurio, and Bill Hamelin continue to support the Donald J. Mitchell VA clinic in Rome. Year to date, 2019 these folks have provided assistance to 394 veterans investing 1,077 hours of volunteer time, equivalent to 27 weeks (at 40 per week) of volunteer labor. At a modest rate of \$15 per hour for this service, it would cost the VA \$16,155. These volunteers provide computer assistance for enrollment in programs like MyhealthVet, Ebenefits, Honor Flight, as well as aiding with directions and movement of VA patients, and perform ombudsman work to ensure patient satisfaction.

Syracuse Honor Flight

We have registered 10 more veterans for the Syracuse Honor Flight trips.

Flu Vaccinations Available to Veterans

Flu season is upon us. If you get your care through the VA, shots start October 1st, each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 1300~1500. Flu shots will be administered into November if the need is there. No appointment necessary. Shots are also available at any Walgreens, just show your VA card. Walgreens will electronically send your information to, the VA to be entered into your medical record. Note that Walgreens does not administer the 65+ Flu vaccine.

Veteran usage of Urgent Care Facilities Approved

As part of the VA MISSION ACT of 2018, Veterans who have received medical care from the VA, or VA sponsored community providers, anytime during the last 24 months are now eligible to utilize URGENT CARE. If you are in Priority Group 1~5, the first 3 visits in a year are free, and after that there is a \$30 co-pay for each visit. Priority Groups 6~8 will incur co-payments of \$30 for each visit. Locations are available throughout NY state (and US). If the veteran encounters problems, call 866-620-2071 for assistance.

Local URGENT CARE facilities are: **Primary Urgent Care**, 1904 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13502, 315-804-6800 and the **Well Now Urgent Care facility** located at 230 N. Genesee St., Utica, NY 13502, 315-271-2394. If you live in Rome you can visit the **Well Now Urgent Care facility** at 103 West Dominick St., Suite 10, Rome, NY 13440. Other locations can be found at: <https://vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com/Locator/Care>

Ft. Drum Legal office offers Wills, Healthcare Proxies, Living Wills, Power of Attorney

Military retirees, don't forget you can obtain, at no cost to you, wills, healthcare proxy/living wills, and Power of Attorneys from the Ft. Drum Legal office, located at Clark Hall, 10720 Mt. Belvedere Blvd., Ft. Drum, NY 13602. The number to make an appointment is: 315-772-5261.

Veterans Crisis Line

If any veteran is in need of help, they can contact the **Veterans Crisis Line** at: 800-273-8255, press 1, or by **text at**: 838255, or by **chat at**: veteranscrisisline.net/chat.

DOD Travel Information

The Department of Defense has established an official DOD sponsored/sanctioned web page that retirees can access for reduced prices with air flights, hotels, etc. The **American Forces Travel** page is located at this address:

<https://www.americanforcetravel.com/>

After you select your hotel, flight, etc., and before it lets you proceed further, it will ask for some information to verify your eligibility. Once your eligibility has been approved it will allow you to proceed. DOD has a contract through Priceline to provide discounts for military personnel and retirees.

Optical services through the VA

Do You Wear Glasses? Need a new set of frames & lenses....do you get your glasses from the VA? They should provide them for you at (normally) no cost. Stop at the Rome clinic to find out if you are eligible through the VA. Also, Ft. Drum Medical will provide hearing aids to retirees and spouse at COST.

Link to Ft. Drum:

<http://www.drum.amedd.army.mil/ContactUs/SitePages/Contact%20Us.aspx>

The Navy also has a program where they will provide you with one free pair of glasses each year. Here's the site for that process below. It does not matter what Military Service a person served in either.

Link to Navy Optical:

<https://www.med.navy.mil/SITES/NOSTRA/ORDER/Pages/Retiree.aspx>

2020 EVENT CALENDAR

Webmaster Greg Bertolini

- April 1, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Vescio's Franklin Hotel.
- May 6, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Aqua Vino.
- May 25, 2020: Memorial Day.
- June 3, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Ancora!
- June 12, 2020: Flag Day ceremony at Peter Gansevoort Elementary School, Rome, NY.
- June 24, 2020: 1730-1930 hrs. Burger Burn with AFRL ACE Students, Hampton Inn - Floyd Ave, Rome, NY.
- July 4, 2020: Celebrate 244 years of Independence.
- July 16, 2020 (Thurs): 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Lake Delta Yacht Club.
- August 5, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Palisades Hotel.
- September 2, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Casa Too Mucha.
- October 7, 2020: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Coalyard Charlies.
- November 10, 2020: 1300-1700 hrs. Annual Veteran's Day Dinner at TBD
- November 11, 2020: Veteran's Day
- December 7, 2020: Pearl Harbor Day

GRUCMOAA Merchandise

Polo Shirts: High quality short sleeved shirts provided by A&P Master Images on Water St. Utica, NY. MasterYourImage.com. Made to order in quantities as low as 1 shirt.

Three options:

- 1) Shirt with embroidered GRUCMOAA Logo. Logo on left breast.
- 2) Shirt with embroidered GRUCMOAA Logo on left, Member Name, Rank, Branch, and Status on right.
- Shirt with embroidered GRUCMOAA Logo on left, embroidered American Flag on left sleeve, Member Name, Rank, Branch, and Status on right.



- Sample Option 3) Costs less than \$25.00:

2.5" x 5" Vinyl Decals (apply to outside of surface): \$3.00 each
2.5" x 5" Static Cling Decals (apply to inside of surface): \$3.00 each
2" x 3.5" Business Card sized magnet: \$1.00 each

- Sample for decals, static cling, and magnet:



Challenge Coins: \$8.00 each



- Sample Front and Back of the coin:

NOVEMBER 10, 2019 VETERANS' DAY ANNUAL DINNER

The Board of Directors concurred on revising the purpose and date of the Annual Dinner. Henceforth, GRUCMOAA will commemorate all veterans, with special focus on notable veterans from WWII to present. This event will be the Sunday of Veterans' Day or the Sunday immediately preceding Veterans' Day.

Dinner will be held at **DiCastro's Too, 738 Erie Boulevard West, Rome, NY 13440.**

A buffet dinner will be served which will include:

- *Homemade Pasta in Sauce*
- *Roasted Chicken*
- *Pork Loin Carving Station*
- *Fresh Garden Salad*
- *House Italian or Ranch Dressing*
- *Vegetable*
- *Homemade Bread and Butter*
- *Non-alcoholic Beverages*
- *Coffee or Tea*
- *White Cake with Strawberry and Cannoli Filling*
- *Cash Bar*

Military member dress is Mess Dress, Class 'A' or business formal, guest dress is business formal. Cost is \$33.00 per person (\$25.00 Active Duty), and guests are welcome. The dinner will also be open to the public. Note: price includes buffet meal, taxes, 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 **Friday, November 1st**, to ensure seating. When completing the reservation form in this newsletter, specify the total number of people in your party. We will use 'Sign-Up Guru' for headcount purposes, but we do request submission of paid reservations via USPS mail.

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!

JROTC Color Guard Presents the Colors

The Color Guard from one of the JROTC programs 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 recognize any WWII and Korean War soldiers who are 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.

GRUCMOAA FUNDRAISING EVENT – OCTOBER 24, 2019 [THURSDAY]

In collaboration with the Rome Teachers Federal Credit Union, 924 Turin St, Rome, NY 13440 and Scotty's Smokehouse BBQ, there will be a Chicken BBQ held at the RT Federal Credit Union from 1300 to 1700 hrs., Thursday, October 24th. Advance sale tickets are \$10.00, and \$11.00 on the day of the BBQ. A portion of the total proceeds will be donated to GRUCMOAA for Wreaths Across America. Please spread the word to your friends asking them to support this event. I'm told that Scotty's has a reputation for great BBQ. The BBQ will consist of ½ chicken and two sides.



Annual Veterans' Day Dinner Reservation
Sunday, November 10, 2019
RSVP via Signup Genius, with payment via USPS mail.
Please ensure we receive your payment NLT Friday, November 1, 2019.

Please return your dinner reservation check, dues payment check, House of Good Shepherd donation check, all payable to GRUCMOAA. Wreaths Across America donation checks should be made payable to Wreath Across America. Send forms and checks to:
GRUCMOAA Treasurer, P.O. Box 36, Rome, New York 13442-0036

Name: _____

Number of Guests: _____

Guest Names: _____

Total Dinners: _____ @ \$ 33.00 per person* = \$ _____

*\$25.00 per person for **Active Duty Military**



Holiday Wreaths for a Veterans Gravesite: _____ @ \$15 each =

\$ _____

Note: Make wreaths checks payable to Wreaths Across America.

2020 DUES STATEMENT

Please renew your 2020 membership by November 1, 2019 by sending your check, payable to **GRUCMOAA, to GRUCMOAA Treasurer, P.O. Box 36, Rome, New York 13442-0036**

***Indicates required information**

* Name: _____ *Rank: _____

*Address: _____

Occupation: _____ Service Branch: _____

*Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Spouse First Name: _____

Spouse Last Name (if different): _____

*Your Email: _____

*Dues Enclosed: _____ Life Member ***MUST provide Birth Date:*** _____

_____ \$20.00 Regular Membership

_____ \$10.00 Active Duty/Guard/Reserve Membership

_____ \$10.00 Auxiliary Membership

Widow/Widower of a member or qualifying individual

_____ \$5.00 Auxiliary Non-Attendee Membership

(Non-Attendee Status is for our homebound, nursing home members, or members living more than 50 miles away).

*2020 Dues Enclosed: \$ _____ <or> Life Membership Dues: \$ _____

Prior Year Dues Enclosed: \$ _____

*Total Dues Enclosed: \$ _____

*Check Number: _____

GRUCMOAA CHAPTER LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURE:

Age (in 2020)	Membership Fee
50 and under:	\$300
51 to 55:	\$282
56 to 60:	\$265
61 to 65:	\$242
66 to 70:	\$213
71 to 75:	\$184
76 to 80:	\$153
81 to 85:	\$118
86 and over:	FREE!