



FALL 2020 GRUCMOAA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President Joe Maurer

Greetings

In this most unusual year of schedule changes and forced reductions in activities, our Chapter has enjoyed many accomplishments. I want to thank you for your continued loyal support and dedication to our mission. Even though we have met infrequently over the past few months, because of your involvement, we have achieved many successes in 2020.

2020 Achievements

Despite adversity, we continue to drive on! We have kept up with financial assistance to our JROTC detachments and NNDCC unit and to our fellow vets through support of organizations like the Vietnam Veterans' Association, the Rome Marine Corps Association and the Rome Veterans' Council.

We have maintained our stellar support of our mission at The Donald j. Mitchell VA Clinic where three of our members --plus one spouse -- provide significant volunteer hours in assisting those who care for the health and welfare of over 7,000 vets who regularly use the clinic each year. As a side note, it may interest you to know that on Friday, 18 September 2020. I had the honor to present a GRUCMOAA Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. William Jorgensen at his farewell dinner at the Delta Lake Inn. Dr. Jorgensen, a Chapter member, is leaving the Rome VA Clinic where he has been the Medical Director for the last three years to take a similar position at the Kansas City VA. Throughout the evening it was made obvious to me how much our presence is valued by clinic staff members. You can take pride in the role of our chapter at the clinic and the work of our volunteers led by Director and Membership Chairperson, Bill Hamelin.

We're a Level of Excellence Winner Again!

For our efforts in 2019 we have been recognized with a Four-Star Level of Excellence Award among all chapters of our size nationally. Our local impact as a service organization is meaningful and that's why we're among the perennial LOE awardees. Thanks goes to you, the members, for supporting your Chapter.

Upcoming Chapter Events and Fundraisers

Boscov's Friends Helping Friends 2020 will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, 14 & 15 October 2020 from 0900 to 2100 hours. Shoppers at the New Hartford Boscov's – and on-line – will get 20% off most items and ***5% of the net sale price will be donated to our Chapter. You must mention or enter the term "GRUCMOAA" when prompted to name your charity. Tell your friends and family members who shop at Boscov's about this and ask them to identify "GRUCMOAA" at checkout.***

Chicken BBQ for Wreaths Across America will be held on Tuesday, 27 October 2020 1200 to 1600 hours at the Rome Teachers' Federal Credit Union parking lot at 924 Turin Road. This was a big success last year and promises to be even better this year. We will again need our members to sell advance dinner tickets and help out for a one-hour shift on the 27th at the parking lot.

Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held on Sunday, 08 November 2020 1300 to 1700 hours at DiCastro's Too, 615 Erie Blvd. West in Rome. Our hosts Lisa and Jim DiCastro have assured me that there will be comfortable spacing for 50 people while observing all safety measures. Bill and Lori Hamelin have generously offered to stock a Chinese Auction for the benefit of The House of The Good Shepherd. Let's have a good turnout for this event to celebrate a successful year and each other! Dinner sign-up form is included in this newsletter.

Wreaths Across America in Rome, NY will be held on Saturday, 19 December 2020 at 1200 hours in Rome Area Cemeteries. Our goal will be to sponsor and place at least 1,000 wreaths. While Covid 19 is adversely impacting our fund raising, we still will have a successful event this year because you are stepping up! Acting on a suggestion made by Joan Herr at our 09 September 2020 Dinner Meeting that members buy wreaths, we asked that Chapter members consider buying a wreath for Bob Haley. To date, 9 members have sponsored 35 wreaths in Bob's memory. Chip has been notified by Wreaths Across America Headquarters that we're doing this on the occasion of the first anniversary of Bob's passing. Nice touch!

GET OUT THE VOTE! GRUCMOAA patriots do not have to be reminded to vote but your friends and family members need to be encouraged to show up and vote on or before Election Day, 03 November 2020. You can't change anyone's choice of candidates, but the dark forces can only win when there's a low voter turnout. Make sure everyone in your family votes!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Director Bill Hamelin

Current membership status is as follows:

Paid Members:	34
Paid Auxiliary Members:	4
Life Members:	17
Auxiliary Life Members:	7
Honorary Members:	2 (Fulfill criteria for GRUCMOAA membership)
Non-Members:	9 (Not counted for MOAA purposes)
Overdue Members:	3
Overdue Auxiliary Members:	0
Total 2020 Membership:	67

Bill will be sending out periodic reminders for those still overdue for 2020. The 2021 membership form is enclosed. Please complete the 2021 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=h&utm_medium=header&utm_campaign=Join

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

VA ROME COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC Director Bill Hamelin

Due to the virus pandemic, volunteers were not permitted to operate within the VA from 16 March 2020 through 01 September 2020. However, from 01 January 2020 through 15 March 2020, our volunteers assisted 96 veterans and provided 428 volunteer hours at the Rome Donald J. Mitchel VA clinic. We're pleased to report that volunteer services have resumed, although slowly. Our volunteers provide the required in-person authentications, and can now use VA Video Connect services and telephone services to authenticate veterans remotely. Due to the clinic operating on a "limited" access methodology to prevent overcrowding; entry into the clinic has been modified as follows: when a veteran has an appointment, they are not allowed to enter the facility until 15 mins. prior to that appointment. Masks must be worn at all times, and temperatures are taken upon entry. There are a few quick screening questions that are asked to complete the process. No one is allowed to accompany a veteran to their appointment unless it is medically required to provide assistance to that veteran during their visit. All immunizations are provided to veterans in the main parking lot (signs are posted directing to the immunization point). Flu shots will begin on 01 October 2020. Audiology support is now available at the clinic to perform minor repairs twice a week; an appointment is required.

VA RED COAT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Director Bill Hamelin

The VA Red Coat Ambassador program is a special volunteer program instituted at the Syracuse VA Medical Center and its associated Primary Care clinics. This program allows volunteers to assist veterans with specialized computer programs, such as Myhealthvet and Ebenefits.

Myhealthvet allows veterans the ability to access, interact, and view their medical information, which includes lab test results, prescription ordering and tracking, medical imaging, communicating with their primary care team, and making in-person and video connect appointments. It also accepts veteran input on a variety of health-related items like weight, blood pressure, medical treatment from outside the VA and OTC medications.

Ebenefits is a program that allows veterans to access their disability information, make an application for benefits, track compensation exam results, apply for VA loan certificate, track compensation payments, appeals, and many others.

These volunteers receive specialized training with these programs to assist veterans with enrollment and usage of these programs.

Red Coat Ambassadors also act as Ombudsman for the veteran when they visit or contact the VA clinic with an issue. They assist the veteran by ensuring they are routed to the proper office or representative for swift and efficient response to the issue presented. Any issues faced by the veteran that cannot be resolved by the Red Coat Ambassador, can then be escalated to the immediate attention of the clinic Nurse Manager for resolution. This methodology has greatly reduced the frustration and delay sometimes encountered by veterans navigating through the VA.

Chapter members who perform this mission five days a week are (L to R): CDR Steven Mercurio, USN (RET), CW4 William J. Hamelin Jr, USA, (RET), and LTCOL Joseph Maurer, USA, (RET).



VETERAN USE 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 OFFERRING ASSISTANCE WITH WILLS, HEALTHCARE PROXIES, LIVING WILLS, AND 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>

GRUCMOAA BIDS FAREWELL TO A LONG TIME FRIEND OF THE CHAPTER

It was recently announced by Patty Rizzo, that she intends to retire from the restaurant business. Hence, our days of Mexican dining at Casa Too Mucha under Patty's management will come to an end. In recognition of Patty's support and hospitality extended to GRUCMOAA, President Maurer presented Patty with a Certificate of Appreciation at the September 9th Member/Guest Dinner.



2021 EVENT CALENDAR

- April 7, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Vescio's Franklin Hotel.
- May 5, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Aqua Vino.
- May 31, 2021: Memorial Day.
- June 2, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Ancora!
- June 14, 2021: Flag Day ceremony at Peter Gansevoort Elementary School, Rome, NY.
- June TBD 2021: 1730-1930 hrs. Burger Burn with AFRL ACE Students, Hampton Inn - Floyd Ave, Rome, NY.
- July 4, 2021: Celebrate 244 years of Independence.
- July 15, 2021 (Thurs): 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Lake Delta Yacht Club.
- August 4, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at TBD.
- September 1, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at TBD.
- October 6, 2021: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Coalyard Charlies.
- November 1, 2021: GRUCMOAA Membership dues 2022 deadline.
- November 7, 2021: 1300-1700 hrs. Annual Veteran's Day Dinner at TBD.
- November 11, 2021: Veteran's Day.
- December 7, 2021: 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.
- 3) 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 8, 2020 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, 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, October 30th**, 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. New for this year, Bill and Lori Hamelin have generously offered to stock a Chinese Auction for the benefit of The House of The Good Shepherd. Please remember the young children trying to adapt to the challenges this world puts before them.



Annual Veterans' Day Dinner Reservation
Sunday, November 8, 2020
RSVP via Signup Genius, with payment via USPS mail.
Please ensure we receive your payment NLT Friday, October 30, 2020.

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* = \$ _____



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

\$ _____

Note: Make wreaths checks payable to Wreaths Across America. If this is a donation for a specific veteran, please identify them here:

2021 DUES STATEMENT

Please renew your 2021 membership by October 30, 2020 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).

***2021 Dues Enclosed:** \$ _____ **<or> Life Membership Dues:** \$ _____

Prior Year Dues Enclosed: \$ _____

***Total Dues Enclosed:** \$ _____

***Check Number:** _____

GRUCMOAA CHAPTER LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURE:

Age (in 2021)	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!