

GREATER ROME UTICA CHAPTER

# GRUC MOAA



## 2022 SPRING NEWSLETTER

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT | Greater Rome Utica (N.Y.) Chapter

### Remembering the Fallen



GRUCMOAA published in the Feb 2022 MOAA Magazine! See page 13 for the full article.

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

P.O. BOX 36 ROME, NY 13442-0036

[www.GRUCMOAA.org](http://www.GRUCMOAA.org)

## PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

### GREETINGS

GREG BERTOLINI

We've flipped a few calendar pages since our last newsletter. We're still in the midst of transition of a number of responsibilities in the chapter. I'm pleased to be elected as President, and I know there are some big shoes to fill, to which I hope I don't disappoint. The following are our Board of Directors for 2022:

#### Officers

President: CPT Gregory Bertolini,  
USAR(Ret)  
Vice President: CW4 William Hamelin,  
USA(Ret)  
Secretary: CDR Robert Piper, USN(Ret)  
Treasurer: LTC Joseph Maurer,  
USAR(Ret)

#### Directors

Past President: LTC Joseph Maurer,  
USAR(Ret)

Chaplain: MAJ James Martinez,  
USAF(Ret)  
COL William R. Gray, Jr., USAF(Ret)  
LTC Lawrence Calabrese, USAR(Ret)  
CDR Stephen Mercurio, USN(Ret)  
MAJ Edwin Herr, USAF(Ret)  
MAJ Edgar W Michie, Jr. USAF(Ret)  
CPT John 'Jack' Hosp, USMC  
1LT Steve Peek, USAF  
Spouse Liaison: Cheryl 'Sherri' Skogland  
(Aux)

MOAA, NYS Council of Chapter members and GRUC are all knee deep into the Advocacy in Action process which will be closing on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Joe Maurer, Bill Hamelin and I have met with Rep Tenney (NY22), Patrick Mahan, Military Legislative Assistant to Rep Malliotakis (NY11), and Rep Delgado (NY19). Flip to the Legislative Action section for more details.

We anticipate continued support for the 3 JROTC and 1 NDCC unit this year. There's one change to the program there, however. When the Space Force was created, it required a change to the MOAA emblem, which adorns the MOAA Medal awarded to junior cadets. Due to delays in availability of the ribbon and new medal, GRUC will be discontinuing that award. We will still provide the monetary scholarships as we have in the past.

A new sponsor recognition program has been instituted for Wreaths Across America. GRUC has recognized forty sponsors from the 2021 event with a framed certificate of appreciation. Flip to the WAA section for complete details.

The inaugural GRUC Member / Guest dinner was held at Vescio's Franklin Hotel; many thanks to the 21 folks attending, to include our new member Steve and Nancy Peek. Also joining was Joe Messineo, Veterans History Project coordinator and Key Bank WAA Sponsor contact. We also celebrated a keystone birthday for Rose Hosp. Many wished for continued longevity. Future events dates and locations are on the 'Events' tab of our website [www.grucmoaa.org](http://www.grucmoaa.org).

This year GRUC will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Charter. We'll have a guest speaker from MOAA and have asked a couple elected officials to make proclamations recognizing the auspicious event. We'd like to set up a historic display showcasing the events of those 50 years. **This is a call for action to all members to review their memorabilia and loan any GRUC specific mementos for display.** Any items loaned are promised to be returned.



**GRUCMOAA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Request memorabilia for historic display of our Chapter**

Best Wishes to all for continued good health,

Greg

## 2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 13, 2022: 0200 hrs. Daylight Savings Time begins.
- April 6, 2022: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Vescio's Franklin Hotel.
- May 4, 2022: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Aqua Vino.
- May 30, 2022: Memorial Day.
- June TBD, 2022: 1730-1930 hrs. Burger Burn with AFRL ACE Students, Hampton Inn - Floyd Ave, Rome, NY.
- June 14, 2022: Flag Day.
- July 4, 2022: Celebrate 246 years of Independence.
- July 14, 2022 (Thursday): 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Lake Delta Yacht Club.
- August 17, 2022: 1700-2045 hrs. GRUC 50th Anniversary celebration at the Oneida Lake Brew Haus.
- August 27, 2022: 0800-1400 hrs. Retiree Appreciation Day at Fort Drum, NY.
- September 7, 2022: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at El Jarocho.
- October 5, 2022: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at The Delta Lake Inn.
- November 1, 2022: GRUC Membership dues 2023 deadline.
- November 5, 2022: 1300-1700 hrs. Annual Veteran's Day Dinner at DiCastros Too, 738 Erie Blvd West, Rome.
- November 6, 2022: 0200 hrs. Daylight Savings Time ends.
- November 11, 2022: Veteran's Day.
- December 7, 2022: Pearl Harbor Day.
- December 17, 2022: 1200 hrs Wreaths Across America.

## MEMBERSHIP

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

BILL HAMELIN

Paid Membership:	24	Honorary Membership:	4
Life Membership:	17	Non-Members:	8
Paid/Life Aux Membership:	4/5		
<u>Free for 2022</u>	<u>3</u>	Over-due:	14
Total Paid	53		

GRUC-MOAA would like to welcome some new members: Brian Daniels, LtCol, USAF, Jack Lo Medico, LTC, USA, (RET), and Rich Smith, CW04, USA (RET).

It is with great sadness we remind everyone of three of our members who have passed this year. Donald 'Gunner' Beyer, CW04, USN on 1/21/2022, William Countryman, 1Lt., USA, on 2/1/2022, and Auxiliary members, Shirley Waters on 12/23/2021 and Mary Winberg on 3/10/2022.

Bill will be sending out periodic reminders for those still overdue for 2020/2021. Membership form is enclosed at the end of this newsletter. Please complete the 2022 membership form and return it with payment. You can also renew by visiting the GRUCMOAA web page:

***[http://grucmoaa.org/html/join\\_gruc.html](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. A "free" membership is available! 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](https://ebiz.moaa.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Default.aspx?TabId=153&utm_source=hp&utm_medium=header&utm_campaign=Join)***

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

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances as of April 1, 2022

JOE MAURER

\$8,281.91 (Checking) + \$3,664.37 (Savings) = \$11,946.28 Cash On Hand

Due to the clinic operating on a “limited” access methodology to prevent overcrowding; entry into the clinic continues to be modified as follows:

- When a veteran has an appointment, they are not allowed to enter the facility until 15 minutes prior to that appointment.
- Masks must be worn at all times, and temperatures are taken upon entry.
- Cloth masks are not acceptable. Masks are available when you enter if you do not have one.
- 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.

**Flu shots will begin in October 2022.** We are planning to start drive up FLU clinics in October. You may also share the following information which will also be on the postcard the Veterans receive about the FLU shot clinic.

**Covid Shots/Boosters:** If you need to get a COVID vaccination or booster, please send a Secure Message through MyHealthVet or call 315-425-4488 to schedule an appointment.

Many medical appointments are still being done “virtually” and are well received by most veterans.

**Clinic Renovations coming:** Major renovations and improvements to the VA clinic will be taking place soon. An elevator shortcut corridor will eventually be constructed so they are facing the main entry doors rather than having to walk a long distance through the clinic. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor area will be undergoing major renovations so additional space can be utilized to increase care for veterans. In addition, new heating, ventilation, and heating units will be installed. Completion is scheduled for some time in 2023.

In the future, Cardiology, ENT, ECHO, GYN, and perhaps some limited general surgery will be available. The installation of the CATSCAN machine has been delayed. All these efforts and improvements are being made to enhance veteran care and reduce travel.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

GRUC supports the following organizations with volunteers, donations, and/or scholarships:

- T.R. Proctor High School Navy JROTC
- Rome Free Academy Air Force JROTC
- Notre Dame High School Navy JROTC
- Central Valley Academy Navy NDCC
- Honor Flight, Syracuse, NY
- The House of The Good Shepherd
- Wreaths Across America
- Veterans Council of Rome
- Information Assurance, Advanced Course in Engineering [ACE]
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 944 Patriot Run Sponsorship
- Volunteering as van drivers and support staff at the Donald Mitchell VA Clinic
- Membership on the NY22 Veterans Advisory Committee
- Membership on the NY22 Military Academy Selection Committee.

### WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA, ROME NY

JOE MAURER

Our Chapter will hold its 11th Wreaths Across America in Rome, NY celebration at 12 Noon on Saturday, December 17, 2022!

Community interest and support for the ceremonies at our six area cemeteries continues to grow. Last year we reached another all-time high in wreaths sponsored and funds raised. We widened our appeal for support to include some new corporate donors who responded with very generous wreath sponsorships. Overall in 2021, we had a 35% increase in wreaths placed and funds raised over 2020. We look to do even better this year thanks to some new fundraising ideas and strategies from our Board and chief



*Central Valley Academy cadets help at the Wreath Clean Up Day at St. Peter's Cemetery on March 27, 2022*

supporters. Wreaths Across America is a popular event because it offers the opportunity to celebrate our deceased military veterans while supporting the youth of our community. Representatives of the businesses and charitable foundations who support us like the fact that

one-third of the money donated for a wreath stays right here in Rome-Utica and the Valley for investment in our future leaders.

In 2022 we're changing our sponsorship approach letter to include giving levels. Up to now our letter has simply asked for a donation of "as many \$15 wreaths as deemed appropriate"; starting this year, the letter will ask for donations at giving levels of GOLD (\$1,000-5,000), SILVER (\$500-999) and BRONZE (\$75-499). This change was suggested by our top corporate donor and approved by our Board of Directors.

Another new addition is a Certificate of Appreciation for our wreath sponsors. Based on design ideas from the Board members, Greg Bertolini designed and produced the Certificate for presentation to each of our corporate sponsors. It's a big hit with everyone!

In the February 2022 edition of **Military Officer** magazine our Chapter's Wreaths Across America program is featured in the "Chapter Spotlight" section. If you missed it, you can still check it out on the MOAA website under publications or read it at the end of this newsletter (page 13).



*GRUCMOAA President Greg Bertolini presents WAA Certificate of Appreciation to John Calabrese, owner of Express Employment Professionals, long standing supporters of our chapter.*

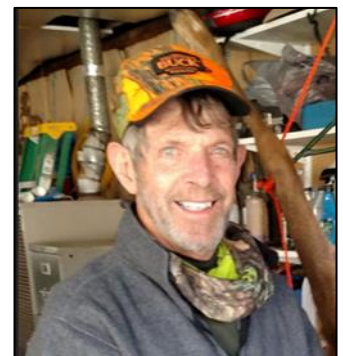
## JROTC and NDCC

GRUC intends to continue sponsoring the Annual Awards and Scholarships at RFA, Notre Dame, Proctor, and CVA. In 2021, GRUC presented \$3450.00 in cash to fourteen cadets from the four schools.

This past year, Don "Gunner" Beyer passed away and recently, Notre Dame High School NJROTC has approached GRUCMOAA with a request to establish a scholarship at Notre Dame NJROTC honoring Gunner's NJROTC accomplishments here in the Mohawk Valley.

Gunner served in the U.S. Navy for 26 years as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician and Navy Diver during Vietnam, during which time he was in combat in the jungles and rivers of Vietnam, receiving the Purple Heart Medal after being wounded as a result of enemy action. When he started his family, Gunner transitioned to an Aviation Ordnanceman where he rose through the

## GREG BERTOLINI



*Contribute to Gunner's NJROTC Scholarship*

ranks to Chief Warrant Officer 4 earning him the coveted status title of “Gunner”. After retiring from the Navy, his family moved back to Marcy, NY where he became a Naval Science Instructor at Notre Dame High School NJROTC. In 2001, Proctor High School sought to start an NJROTC program, at which time Gunner departed Notre Dame to stand up Proctor’s program. After 24+ years of teaching NJROTC, Gunner retired, but found he could not sit around, so when Central Valley High School sought to start an NJROTC program, he returned to his passion molding youth leaders as their new NJROTC instructor.

Gunner Beyer is responsible for starting 2 of the 3 NJROTC programs in the Mohawk Valley and his legacy of grooming youth leaders (many serving in the military now) should not be forgotten. If you would like to contribute to the Gunner Beyer scholarship, please contact Treasurer Joe Maurer at P.O. Box 36, Rome, NY 13442-0036.

In 2022, we have provided funding for trophies for the Proctor Drill Meet, and to CVA for their participation in ‘Brain Brawl’ held in San Diego, CA April 27 to May 2, 2022. Our support to these cadets does not go without results. In the 2022 service academy selection process, Representative Tenney (NY22) selected eleven students for the academies, from that eleven, four were cadets from the sponsored schools: Lauren Dorfman, Rome Free Academy (WP, AF, and USNA), Mario Mannella, Proctor High School (USNA), Shreya Patel, Central Valley Academy (USNA), and Nicholas Shedd, Central Valley Academy (USNA).

## HONOR FLIGHT - SYRACUSE

**BILL HAMELIN**

The next Honor Flight (mission #016) is scheduled for April 30, 2022.

## VETERANS NEWS

### 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](https://veteranscrisisline.net/chat).

### ONEIDA COUNTY VETERANS REPRESENTATIVES

If you need to file a VA compensation claim, and live in Oneida County, please contact the Oneida County Veterans Service Office located within the Rome VA clinic. Representatives Joseph Perrone, and Dan Gowey are available to assist veterans through this complex process. If you have any questions regarding a medical condition that was incurred through military service, primary or secondary injuries, and wondering if filing a claim would be proper, please call or stop by their office and they will be happy to assist. Please inform your spouses, that if you, as the veteran, die from a service-connected injury, they may be entitled to Dependent Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments. They can also call or stop by for a quick determination if they qualify for these monthly payments.



Contact Information is: 315-798-5830, or [jperrone@ocgov.net](mailto:jperrone@ocgov.net)

### **FORT DRUM LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

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.

### **DOD TRAVEL INFORMATION**

**Space A travel is back to pre-pandemic levels effective 4/26/22, although some COVID restrictions may still apply.**

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 (through ID.ME). 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.

# LEGISLATIVE

## Advocacy in Action (AiA)

Greg Bertolini

This April our Chapter Legislative Liaison Team helped generate support for pending legislation addressing MOAA's three top legislative priorities. We coordinated with all the members of our State Council to schedule meetings with each member of the NY State Congressional Delegation. Our Chapter was tasked to meet with Reps Tenney (NY22), Malliotakis (NY11) and Delgado (NY19). A Zoom meeting was held with Congresswoman Tenney on April 6<sup>th</sup>, Patrick Mahan, Military Legislative Assistant for Rep Nicole Malliotakis (NY11) on April 25<sup>th</sup> and on April 27<sup>th</sup> with Rep Antonio Delgado (NY19). The intent is to urge the Representatives to sign on as co-sponsors of pending bills on **The Richard Star Act HR 1282 and S 344, The Stop Copay Overpay Act HR 4824, and Military Pay and Benefits: Backbone of the All-Volunteer Force which favors holding the 4.6% pay raise.**



*On April 6<sup>th</sup>, Joe Maurer, Bill Hamelin, and Greg Bertolini met with Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (NY22)*

*On April 25<sup>th</sup>, Joe Maurer, Bill Hamelin, and Greg Bertolini met with Patrick Mahan, Military Legislative Assistant for Rep Nicole Malliotakis (NY11)*



*On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Joe Maurer, Bill Hamelin, and Greg Bertolini met with Rep Antonio Delgado (NY19) and Matthew Gerson, Legislative Assistant.*

For your information, here are the results to date: Representatives Tenney, Malliotakis and Delgado are all cosponsors of The Richard Star Act (as are Senators Schumer and Gillibrand). Rep Delgado has sponsored the Reach for Vets Act HR5073 which is expected on the House floor as part of the Strong Vet Act HR6411. He also sponsored the Military Spouse Hiring Act HR2974.

As we've indicated before, our Representatives won't know about the issues affecting the lives of our troops unless we tell them. So, tell them!! It's very easy. Here's how – log onto the MOAA web site [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org), click on "Advocacy" then "Legislative Action Center", click on any topic in the "Take Action" section and fill in a few blanks to send a quick email to your House or Senate member. We also ask that you tear out the eight mailers included in the April Issue of Military Office Magazine, sign, provide postage and mail.

Thanks to Joe Maurer, Bill Hamelin, and Steve Mercurio for the work they did in making this effort a big success.

GRUC members are encouraged to support the MOAA Legislative Priorities for 2022, and to establish relationships with their Legislators.

The 2022 Advocacy in Action topics are:

**The Richard Star Act HR 1282 and S 344** This act will ensure combat-injured veterans receive the vested retirement pay they earned and are no longer punished financially because of their injuries or illness. Specifically, this act will repair the FY2004 NDAA which affected combat injured veterans forced to retire prior to reaching 20 years of service. These veteran's DOD retirement benefits are offset (reduced) dollar-for-dollar for the amount of their VA provided disability payment.

**The Stop Copay Overpay Act HR 4824.** This act will reduce TRICARE copayments (TRICARE Prime and Select) for mental health visits. Since 2017, TRICARE Prime copayments have increased from \$12 / visit to \$33 / visit, TRICARE Select copayments have increased from \$28 / visit to \$38 / visit for Active Duty families and from \$33 / visit to \$50 / visit for Retiree families. These TRICARE copay increases are outpacing the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program copayments which are \$20 / visit. In addition, within the past few weeks, Sens. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and co-signed by Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.; Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va.; Patty Murray, D-Wash.; Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.; and Tina Smith, D-Minn have co-signed a letter encouraging TRICARE to include benefits for eating disorders. Before adding new benefits to the TRICARE package, it's imperative to fix the disproportionate behavioral health copayments. It's a simple fix to change the MHS coding from specialty care to routine care like wellness checks.

**Military Pay and Benefits: Backbone of the All-Volunteer Force which favors holding the 4.6% pay raise.** This is requested to be included in the FY2023 NDAA along with the criteria contained in The Richard Star Act. Of the 38.1 M 17-24 yr old cohort group, only 4.1 M are considered eligible for service based on education, character, and fitness. Of that 4.1 M subgroup, over 400,000 would need to be recruited to achieve the 200,000 enlistments necessary to maintain critical mission effectiveness. Our Armed Forces need to recruit the nation's best, brightest and physically fit, however, they are at a disadvantage when it comes to a dollars and cents comparison to other entry level work opportunities.



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# Remembering the Fallen

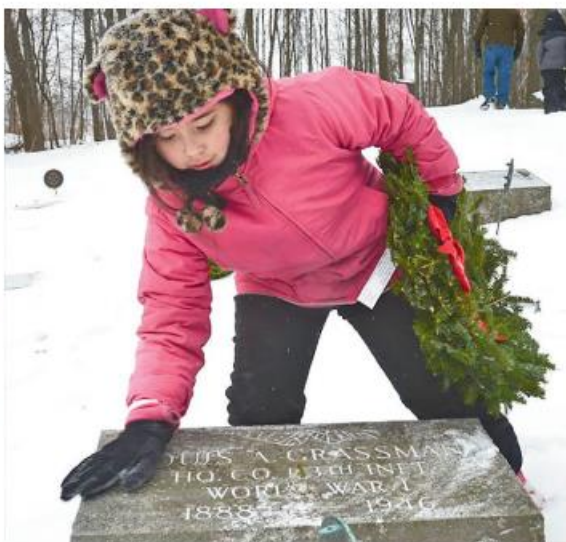
Chapter participates in annual Wreaths Across America Day.

On Dec. 18, 2021, members of the Greater Rome Utica (N.Y.) Chapter held ceremonies at six local cemeteries before working together with other volunteers to place approximately 1,500 wreaths on the graves of veterans.

For the past decade, the chapter has been honoring veterans during the holiday season by participating in Wreaths Across America Day each December, joining in the nationwide mission to remember, honor, and teach by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia as well as at more than 2,500 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad.

Lt. Col. Joseph Maurer, USAR (Ret), past president of the Greater Rome Utica Chapter, organizes the chapter's effort. He and other volunteers work for several months leading up to the Wreaths Across America Day to encourage businesses, organizations, and individuals in the community to sponsor wreaths.

He said the chapter's participation not only helps to fulfill the mission of Wreaths Across



Community volunteers (above and below) place wreaths on the graves of veterans during the 2020 Wreaths Across America Day.



America Day, but it also serves as a fundraiser for other chapter efforts.

"We have a rather small chapter that is involved with supporting several youth groups — Junior ROTC [JROTC]

programs," he said. "Wreaths Across America helps us to raise more than \$5,000 a year to support these programs. It also gives us the opportunity to involve young kids, who participate in the wreath-laying ceremonies."

Maurer points out the cost to sponsor a wreath is \$15, and the chapter receives \$5 back for every wreath.

"We immediately reinvest that money in youth activities — supplementing JROTC training and travel programs... so kids from all



backgrounds have the opportunity to fully participate," he said.

Community involvement is crucial to the success of Wreaths Across America. Maurer said the local community is very supportive.

"A lot of businesses are on board year after year," he said. "Most people are quite patriotic in our area. Often people will sponsor several wreaths to be placed on specific graves and then add in extra money for veterans' graves with no survivors."

Members of the community also show their support by attending the ceremonies and vol-

unteering to place the wreaths.

"About 200 people attend each ceremony," which are held simultaneously, said Maurer.

"Weather can be very crucial in our area, but we never cancel for weather. The people attending are there voluntarily, and they're very patriotic. We get families, Boy Scouts, members of youth organizations — we try to get as many people as possible. That's why I find it to be very enjoyable, because it involves a lot of people, and it helps us involve youth." ■■

— By Blair Drake,  
contributing editor

Link to Article:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/military-officer-magazine/mom-issues-and-archives/february-2022-military-officer/>

## MEDICAL SERVICES

**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. WELL NOW 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>

**Visit a partnering (Community Care Network) location** – Veterans can now visit a participating retail pharmacy or urgent care network and verify eligibility using this VA facility locator:

***<http://www.va.gov/find-locations>***

or by calling 1-877-881-7618. Included are most CVS, Walmart, Costco, Wegmans, Safeway and Kroger pharmacies. Present your government issued ID care (driver's license or VA ID card) and request that your vaccination documentation be forwarded to your VA provider.

### VETERAN SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE CLINIC

GRUCMOAA volunteers work in a daily capacity at the Rome, NY, Donald J. Mitchell, VA clinic. From September 15, 2021 through March 21, 2022, we assisted 2,216 veterans and provided 668 volunteer hours at the clinic. These volunteer efforts have saved the VA \$17,995.92 in costs thus far. Our volunteers provide the required in-person authentications and can now use VA Video Connect services and telephone services to authenticate veterans remotely. We now contact veterans through email, telephone, and texting with information regarding registering for a "Myhealthvet" account. So far over 1,000 contact emails have been sent to veterans.

Effective September 30, 2021, all veterans who had an Advanced Myhealthvet (now known as Basic/Matched) account (MHV) will have to upgrade to a Premium account. All Advanced accounts have been eliminated by the VA. If you had an Advanced account and desire to upgrade, please give Bill, Steve, or Joe a call at 315-334-7118 for assistance on how to best accomplish this.

**Audiology and Podiatry support is now available** at the clinic twice a week, an appointment is required. Please call 315-425-2437 (Audiology) to set up an appointment. To order additional batteries and other accessories, please call 1-303-273-6200 and select option 2.

**Women's Veteran Health Clinic:** The Rome VA clinic has established a robust and excellent woman veteran clinic that is now in full operation. It is conducted by PA Debora Cardinal. Female veterans can request assignment for treatment through this clinic or they can remain with their current primary care provider. Any questions regarding the clinic or registering to utilize it can be made at 315-334-7100 extn: 57318.

**VA Red Coat Ambassador program:** 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 and act as an informal ombudsman, assisting veterans by providing answers to a myriad of questions and ensuring the veteran contacts the proper resource for any assistance they might need. 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.

**MyHealthyVet & eBenefits:** Myhealthvet allows veterans the ability to access, interact, view, or even save, their medical information, which includes lab test results, prescription ordering and tracking, medical imaging, communicating with their primary care team (and other clinics) 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. **NOTE: Myhealthvet is now requiring a 2<sup>nd</sup> level authentication process to access your Myhealthvet (MHV) account. This will be done through an email or text verification. Access your MHV account to set this process in motion.**

Ebenefits is a program that is undergoing a phase out/transition. Currently it 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. VA is trying to simplify access for veterans to various veterans' information and Ebenefits and is transitioning over to: **VA.GOV**

GRUC-MOAA volunteers receive specialized training with these programs to assist veterans with enrollment and usage of these programs. Each year they must complete the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Information Security, and Myhealthvet training through the VA Talent Management System (TMS).

In addition, our volunteers have provided in-depth training classes to the Rome VA clinic staff on Myhealthvet and Ebenefits so they can fully understand what these programs can provide for the veterans but also how the staff/providers can use this system to be more effective and efficient.

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

**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 provide them for you at (normally) no cost. There is an extra charge for tinted glasses. If you are enrolled in the VA you are eligible through the VA. Fort Drum Optometry Clinic will also provide one free pair of glasses each year. You can walk into the clinic and present your eyeglass prescription (must be within the last year). The Optometry Clinic is located at 10501 Euphrates River Valley Rd., Fort Drum, NY. You will have to pick them up at Ft. Drum, no delivery.

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

Link to Navy Optical:

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Naval-Medical-Logistics-Command/Naval-Ophthalmic-Support-and-Training-Activity/Ordering/how-to-order-retiree/>

The Customer Service Line is available: 757-887-7600, option 1.

**Hearing services through the VA:** Fort 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>



## GRUC-MOAA DUES STATEMENT

Please renew your 2022 membership by October 30, 2022 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).

**\*2022 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!

## GRUC-MOAA Merchandise

Polo Shirts: High quality short sleeved shirts provided by A&P Master Images on Water St. Utica, NY. [MasterYourImage.com](http://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: