



Greetings All!

President Joe Maurer

I hope the Spring and Summer find all GRUCMOAA members doing well and enjoying the good weather we've been having. I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight the great things the chapter has done since last fall and what we have projected for this spring and summer.

In 2015, GRUCMOAA accomplished the following objectives:

- The chapter was awarded its second '4 Star Level of Excellence' recognition at the MOAA Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL.
- As a member of the Rome Veterans Council, supported the Veterans' Day Celebration at Veterans' Park in Rome, NY (\$150).
- Participated and donated to the Veterans' Day Celebration at Stokes Elementary School, Rome, NY (\$100).
- Continued the regular monthly member-guest dinners and Spresso's Board of Director meetings.
- Conducted the Annual Meeting, Officer and Director elections, and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner at The Lake Delta Inn, with Col Phil Odom, USAF(Ret), MOAA Deputy Director Government Relations, as guest speaker.
- Continued engagement in support of Wreaths Across America at five Rome cemeteries. Two hundred and fifty volunteers from various service groups and schools were organized and with business and individual support, raised \$4,900.
- Provided gifts and monetary donations to The House of Good Shepherd, Utica, NY Christmas programs (\$210).

- Chapter volunteers provided 996 hours of service at the Donald J. Mitchell VA Clinic at Griffiss Park, Rome, NY, serving over 760 veterans.

Planned activities and projects for 2016:

- Provided monetary support to Daughters of the American Revolution Vietnam Veterans “Welcome Home” event.
- Continue co-sponsorship of a local veteran for Syracuse Honor Flights (April and October) (\$200 per participant).
- Ongoing support through scholarships and awards at the three JROTC programs at Rome Free Academy, Rome, NY, T. R. Proctor High School and Notre Dame High School, Utica, NY (\$1,500 each budgeted for 2016).
- Creation and sponsorship of the “Armed Forces Enlistee Award” which is awarded at Rome Free Academy, Rome, NY and T. R. Proctor High School, Utica, NY to the high school senior with the highest ASVAB score and school average who has enlisted in the armed forces (\$300 each).
- Support Memorial Day Celebration held at Veterans’ Park, Rome, NY.
- Provide a donation to the groundbreaking for The Rome War Memorial at Veterans’ Park, Rome, NY (\$200).
- Participate and provide a monetary donation for the Flag Day Celebration held at Gansevoort Elementary School, Rome, NY (\$100).
- Co-sponsor the Vietnam Veterans of America “Patriot Run” held on Griffiss Park, Rome, NY (\$100).
- Co-host the “Second Annual Burger Burn” in cooperation with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), Rome, NY for the 2016 Advanced Course in Engineering (ACE). The event is open to the ACE students [ROTC cadets, college students from the US, junior military officers from the US and UK], GRUCMOAA members, guests and the 2016-2017 JROTC cadet leaders (\$500).
- Continue the tradition of the Annual Chapter Picnic (8/14) hosted by Jim Tille and Diane Lochocki in, Old Forge, NY (cost \$10 per person payable at the door – RSVP required).
- Support construction of the Rome Vietnam Veterans Memorial (donation amount TBD).

The chapter Board of Directors strives to operate efficiently despite the fund raising value of the Wreaths Across America event. The following measures have been instituted:

- Continuation of the web site hosting by The Info Team. The annual cost has remained flat since 2009 [no rate increase].
- Co-opting with MOAA to produce the Chapter Challenge Coin. The coin design was selected from submissions by the Herkimer BOCES Visual Communications Class of 2015. [Coins can be purchased from Bob Haley for \$8.00 per coin].
- Decision to locally source presentation folders and certificate blanks for the awards given by the chapter. The cost of the chapter presentations is \$.45 less expensive than the cost of just the MOAA presentation folders. We issue an average of 15 certificates each year.
- Production of a locally sourced chapter decal using the GRUCMOAA letter head design [Decals can be purchased from Greg Bertolini for \$3.00 per decal].
- Continued use of the MOAA on-line Membership application and renewal capability for GRUCMOAA members at no cost to the chapter.
- Decision to not subscribe to the Star Chapter Web Hosting Company for chapter communication and recruiting software. This would duplicate our existing capabilities, and was determined to be unnecessary.
- Local sourcing of products for the 2nd Annual Burger Burn resulted in a 56% reduction in the cost of hosting the event. Kudos to Bill Gray and Kim Copeland (AFRL) for the savings.

What the chapter needs from our members:

- Prompt payment of member dues. This has become an issue of grave magnitude with less than half of our members being current with their dues for 2016.
- More volunteers for open Board of Director positions: 3rd Vice President, and (2) Director positions are open.
- More volunteers to solicit and support the Wreaths Across America fund raiser. Volunteers to solicit business and individual sponsors or to place wreaths at any of the six cemeteries participating in 2016.

- Volunteers to assist the 'Readers' program in the Rome, NY elementary schools.

Wreaths Across America in Rome on December 17, 2016

Past President Bob Haley

The Greater Rome Utica Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America continues support for the Wreaths Across America tribute to our deceased veterans. Remembrance wreaths will be placed on veterans' graves at six local cemeteries in Rome on December 17, 2016 following a twenty-minute ceremony. The six cemeteries are: Rome Cemetery, St. Peter's Cemetery, St. Mary's Cemetery, St. John's Cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, and Westernville Cemetery. Local school choruses, students, Boy and Girl Scouts, RFA AFJROTC, T.R. Proctor NJROTC cadets, Patriot Riders, Civil Air Patrol Cadets, local business volunteers, local politicians, musicians, Color Guards from the Eastern Air Defense Sector and local veterans' organizations will all take part in these ceremonies. It is important get as many of our local youth involved as possible; educating our young is part of the Wreaths Across America mission.

- Last year five cemeteries took part and close to 1,000 veterans were honored with remembrance wreaths. Brochures were designed for each cemetery depicting the military exploits of several of the veterans honored. Donations resulted in \$4900 being raised for GRUCMOAA to support scholarships presented to the JROTC programs at RFA, Proctor and Notre Dame, financing of JROTC cadet summer training at Newport, RI, and to send local veterans on Honor Flights to Washington, D.C. This level of support would not be possible without the wreaths program.
- To have another successful year with the wreaths fundraising, members will have to step up in greater numbers in support of this program. Help is needed as follows: soliciting local businesses to sponsor wreaths, distributing flyers around town, seeking individual sponsors, getting local organizations and individuals to take part in the ceremonies, and in collating the brochures for each cemetery. The chapter will provide letters of introduction to be taken to businesses, the requests are made in person to sponsor wreaths. Let GRUCMOAA Treasurer Bob Haley know if you can help in any way, or to suggest local businesses who may want to help out. Bob can be reached at (315) 336-4220 or lakeeffect2@verizon.net. Varflex

and BAE Systems are two local businesses who have already given support for this year's event.



- Chaplain, Major Jim Martinez addresses the WAA participants at St. Mary's Cemetery. Gansevoort Elementary School pupils sang patriotic songs for the occasion.



- Educating our youth is what the WAA program is all about.



- EADS Honor Guard and RFA Acapella Choir at the Rome Cemetery WAA event.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bob Haley

- The treasury began the year with \$8,638.10. For the first six months of this year our expenditures and deposits have been nearly equal, leaving the treasury with roughly the same amount now as we began with. Deposits have been bolstered by checks from Wreaths Across America totaling \$2,500 which was the chapter share for the 2015 wreaths. Our biggest expenditures were \$2,150 for scholarships/awards to the three JROTC units

and \$825 for Proctor cadets attending two weeks of summer training in Newport, RI.

- I expect our treasury to remain solid for the remainder of 2016 and to support the “Honor Flight” in October and to help the Rome Veterans Coalition in the construction of a war memorial honoring all those Roman Service Men and Women who gave their all in U.S. wars since the Civil War.
- Any other request to help the JROTC programs or other veteran organizations can also be considered. Please submit the requests in writing (email is fine) to President Maurer for discussion at the BoD meetings held at Spresso’s.

Legislative Report

Co-chairs Tony Kimball and Bill Gray, Jr.

■ RICHARD HANNA, US REPRESENTATIVE, NEW YORK’S 22ND DISTRICT

■ HOUSE PASSES PLAN TO ADDRESS ZIKA CRISIS

The House of Representatives last week passed a measure to address the Zika threat by laying the groundwork to combat the disease before it becomes a public health crisis in the United States. The bill combined two similar measures that were already considered by the House into a single package that was agreed to by the House and the Senate during conference meetings. The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs portion of the bill totaled \$82.5 billion for Fiscal Year 2017, \$74.4 billion of which will fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the year. It includes an additional \$118 million to address the claims backlog by providing for additional staff and enhanced technology that will enable VA personnel to more efficiently process outstanding claims. It also includes provisions that prevent bonuses for VA executives and that help coordinate the exchange of medical data between the Department of Defense and the VA. The bill importantly includes an emergency appropriation to help research and develop ways to prevent the spread of the deadly Zika virus, which has been linked to severe birth defects in infants born to infected mothers. The bill includes \$1.1 billion in new federal money to address the epidemic by increasing money for federal health agencies, The Conference Report preserved important conditions on how this money is spent and includes fiscally-responsible budget offsets to minimize the effect of this appropriation on the national debt. The bill was approved by a vote of 239 to 171.

■ **STU NAISMITH AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

Two Chenango County students recently received the fifth annual Stu Naismith Memorial Peacemaker Award. Abigail Lane of Chenango Valley High School and Mackenzie Bronson of Chenango Forks High School each won the award that is named for Stuart Naismith, a World War II veteran who passed away in 2011. Stu was a teacher in both school districts and an avid advocate for peace. The awards were presented on June 6 and June 10 jointly by Veterans for Peace and the Binghamton Community Friends Meeting. Abigail and Mackenzie earned the awards by displaying a commitment to promoting peace in their everyday lives. They each demonstrated their ongoing preparation for continued education and wrote essays on peacemaking. Both winners were awarded \$350 scholarships. The top photo shows Stu's daughter Cheryl Ryder, Abigail, Joyce Thomas of the Binghamton Community Friends Meeting, Larry Evans of Veterans for Peace, and Stu's wife Peggy Naismith. Congratulations to Abigail and Mackenzie!

■ **UC YOUNG SCHOLARS VISIT WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Utica College's Young Scholars recently visited Washington, D.C. and met on the steps of the U.S. Capitol before taking a tour through the Capitol Visitor's Center. The Young Scholars Program was initiated in Utica by representatives from the Utica City School District and Utica College. Their goal was to address the problem that few, if any, minority students were graduating from T.R. Proctor High School in the early 1990s. This collaboration led to the creation of the Young Scholars Program. Congressman Richard Hanna is a longtime supporter of Young Scholars, which is a multi-year program designed to motivate young students to stay in school, earn a New York State Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, and pursue post-secondary education. [Click here to learn more](#) about the Young Scholars Program. Keep up the great work, Young Scholars!

■ **HANNA RECEIVES FRIEND OF CHILDREN AWARD**

Congressman Richard Hanna was recently honored with the 2016 Friend of Children Staff Choice award by the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension. The award is presented to candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to their mission of "affordable, available, accessible quality early learning for all children." The Child Care Council cited Congressman Hanna's continued support of Universal Pre-Kindergarten education. In April, Congressman Hanna helped launch the first ever Congressional Pre-K Caucus in order to spur a sustained bipartisan conversation on how expanding access to early education will make our

economy more competitive and ensure each child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. Congressman Hanna also introduced the Strong Start for America's Children Act which would expand access to early education for low and middle income children. The Child Care Council works through the Cornell University Cooperative Extension to educate parents, the public, schools, and elected officials about the impact early education can have on children and their future success. Its mission is to ensure that all children have access to quality early care and learning opportunities.

■ DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE READING

The 21st annual public reading of the United States Declaration of Independence will take place at 10 a.m. on July 4 at the Center for Arts in Homer. Charles W. Jermy, Jr. and Charles W. Jermy III will present a timeline of historical events which led up to its adoption in 1776 and then volunteers will read portions of the Declaration. After the reading, church bells will be rung 50 times in commemoration. This is a FREE, family friendly event. All are welcome to attend. For more information, call 607-749-4365 or e-mail cwj1@cornell.edu.

TIME: 10 a.m.

DATE: Monday, July 4

PLACE: Center for the Arts

72 South Main St. Homer, NY

■ NEW YORK STATE SENATE 2016 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the 2016 legislative session, we supported and fought for initiatives to improve the quality of life in communities throughout our state and help ensure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to succeed and realize a bright, prosperous future.

Here are just a few of our significant accomplishments:

- Landmark laws to combat heroin and opioid addiction;
- A comprehensive lead testing bill to ensure clean, safe drinking water in our schools;
- A major, new middle class income tax cut of more than \$4.2 billion for millions of New Yorkers, as well as thousands of small businesses;
- Unprecedented level of school aid (nearly \$25 billion) and the complete elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA);
- Property tax relief in the form of a new round of rebate checks;
- Greater investments in our environment;

- Meaningful ethics reform measures to restore public trust in state government;
- Fair, regionally-balanced funding for job-creating transportation projects across the state;
- An important new law to combat breast cancer; and
- Keeping spending growth below two-percent, which is crucial to protecting New Yorkers from higher taxes.

These measures, and many more, are helping improve the quality of life for New Yorkers of all ages in communities throughout our state.

Upcoming Events

Webmaster Greg Bertolini

- July 2016: No event scheduled. We encourage all to support their local community celebration of our 240 years of independence.
- August 14, 2016: 1300 hrs. Annual GRUC Picnic, Tille Estate, Old Forge, NY.
- September 7, 2016: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Vescio's Franklin Hotel, Rome, NY.
- October 5, 2016: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at Raspberries of Utica, Utica, NY
- November 2, 2016: 1700-2045 hrs. Member / Guest dinner at TBD.
- December 4, 2016: Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner at Delta Lake Inn, Rome, NY.
- December 17, 2016: 1200 hrs. Wreaths Across America memorials at Rome Cemetery, St. Peter's Cemetery, St. Mary's Cemetery, St. John's Cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, and Westernville Cemetery.

ROTC Gold Bar Event

Director Rob Piper

- May 28, 2016, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Ensign Vicky Fam was commissioned at Cornell University.

GRUCMOAA Director Rob Piper and Honorary Member Don "Gunner" Beyer were on hand to present a set of MOAA Gold Bars to Ensign Fam. Vicky attended Cornell University these past 4 years on a Navy ROTC scholarship. Ensign Fam was a cadet in the T.R. Proctor High School NJROTC program.



CDR Rob Piper (L), ENS Vicky Fam, CW4 Don "Gunner" Beyer (R)



USS Winston Churchill, DDG-81

Ensign Fam will be stationed aboard the USS Winston Churchill, DDG-81 homeported in Norfolk, VA. Ensign Fam will serve as a Surface Warfare Officer – ship driver.

