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**SERVING ALL MILITARY, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**\*\*\* Feb 2024 \*\*\***

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### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Greetings of the New Year to you all!  
Hard to say with March just around the corner.

The Genesee Valley Chapter has been busy since our last newsletter, with a Veterans Day Wreath Laying, Chapter Holiday Dinner, VOC clothing drive drop-off, Wreaths Across America, Monroe County Legislative Breakfast Meeting and an Amerks hockey game. And more events are upcoming fairly soon!

Our first chapter dinner of the year is our annual MOAA ROTC/JROTC Awards dinner, where we will recognize cadets and midshipmen of the Rochester areas programs. Details of the event are in the attached flyer and we hope you will make plans to join us for this outstanding event.

With each chapter dinner we target one specific charity for donations, with March's dinner we are asking for your support of The MOAA Foundation, [MOAA - The MOAA Foundation](#).

MOAA's Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign will take place in mid-April, where all members of Congress are visited on one day in Washington DC; New York's team will visit 28 office visits. Further details below.

### **UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS**

**Sat 23 Mar 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm *\*\*Note Day\*\****

**Location: Spencerport Legion Post**  
**Program: ROTC/JROTC Awards Dinner**  
Designated Charity: The MOAA Foundation  
Sponsor ROTC/JROTC Cadets/Families

**Sun 28 Apr 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm**

**Location: Rochester Yacht Club**  
Guest Speaker: Shawn J. Defries, Assoc Dir, VA Finger Lakes Health Care  
Designated Charity: Honor Flight Rochester

**Sun 9 Jun 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm**

**Location: Canandaigua Yacht Club**  
Guest Speaker: Robert K. Nye, President, FLCC & COL, USA, Retired  
Designated Charity: Veterans Outreach Center

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**MOAA National & the Genesee Valley Chapter are nonpartisan.**

**Sun 8 Sep 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm**

**Location: Canandaigua Yacht Club**

Designated Charity: Honor Flight Rochester

Guest Speaker: TBD

**NY Council of Chapters Convention 2024**

15-18 Sep 2024 (Sun-Wed)

Peek'n Peak Resort, Clymer, NY 14724

**Sun 27 Oct 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm**

**Location: Spencerport Legion Post**

Designated Charity: Wreaths Across America

Guest Speaker: TBD

**Sun 8 Dec 2024, 1 pm / 2 pm**

**Location: Brook Lea Country Club**

**Program: Annual Holiday Party**

Ugly Sweater Contest!

Designated Charity: Veterans Outreach Center

**Veterans Day Wreath Laying at the War Memorial, Blue Cross Arena**

GVC 3<sup>rd</sup> VP, Russ Green, and I participated in the Monroe County American Legion Wreath Laying Ceremony for Veterans Day at the Rochester Community War Memorial, on November 10, 2023, along with 18 other groups. In addition to the wreath laying, the ceremony included remarks by Monroe County Veterans Services Director, Nicholas Stefanovic, and US Congressman Joe Morelle.



Chapter President, Tim Vaughan and 3<sup>rd</sup>, VP Russ Green with GVC wreath.

**Annual Chapter Holiday Dinner 2023**

This year's chapter holiday dinner was very festive with at least a dozen "Ugly Sweater" contestants and as you will note below, fun was had by all!



In addition to the fun and festivities, attendees donated new winter clothing items for the Veterans Outreach Center, which totaled three large plastic bags, filling a vital need for the veterans the VOC serves. Many thanks to all who donated to this worthy cause!

**Wreaths Across America 2023 Wrap-up**

Due to the generosity of our members and friends, the chapter had a very successful Wreaths Across America campaign, where over 190 wreaths were donated in GVC's name/identifier.

Jean and I, along with some friends and over a hundred volunteers, helped to place wreaths at the New York State Veterans Cemetery - Finger Lakes (formerly Sampson) on Dec 16, 2023. Although a cloudy day, the temperature was moderate for a mid-December day, and there was no snow on the ground, which was an added bonus! All-in-all, it was a beautiful day to honorably recognize the veteran gravesites and remember the Wreaths Across America mission:

**REMEMBER** our fallen U.S. veterans.

**HONOR** those who serve.

**TEACH** your children the value of freedom.

In addition to all of our individual wreath sponsors, we would like to give a special thank you to Wegmans Geneva Grocery Store and MRB Group for their generous contribution to sponsor 20 wreaths each for the 2023 campaign.

Wreaths Across America Day 2024 will be held on Saturday December 14, 2024, please mark your calendars now.



Wreaths Across America Day, Dec 16, 2023  
NYS Veterans Cemetery - Finger Lakes

### **Veterans Memorial Council Annual Legislative Breakfast**

I attended the VMC Legislative Breakfast on January 27, 2024, which included remarks by 16 elected officials, their representatives, and program directors, followed by a Q&A session. All were supportive of veterans and programs to support veterans. The speakers were:

Joe Morelle, US Congress, NYS Senators Jeremy Cooney and Samra Brouk, NY Assembly members Sarah Clark, Josh Jensen, Jen Lunsford, Brian Manktelow and Demond Meeks Legislative Assistant, Monroe County Legislature members Tracy DiFlorio, Virginia McIntyre, Howard Maffucci, Mercedes Vazquez Simmons, Richard “Rick” B. Milne and Andraé Evans, Irondequoit Town Supervisor, Nicholas Stefanovic, Monroe County Veterans Service Agency and Elizabeth Medina, Program Manager CORPS, Compeer Corps Rochester.



In the above picture, NY Assemblyman Brian Manktelow addresses VMC attendees at the Legislative Breakfast on Sat 27 Dec 2023.

### **GVC Amerks Hockey Game**

GVC members and guests had a fun afternoon of hockey at an Amerks hockey game on Sunday, Feb 18, 2024. Unfortunately, the Amerks lost the game, but there was plenty of action to watch.

We also had the honor of three guests from the University of Rochester NROTC program, which those of us who had an opportunity to speak with them, enjoyed hearing their excitement about future service in the US Navy and US Marine Corps.



UR NROTC Midshipmen, Sean Pelaez, Nicholas Perry & Cameron Niezabytowski, GVC President, Tim Vaughan, and GVC Past President, Bob Zale.

### **TRICARE For Life, Star Act, Housing Help Will Anchor MOAA’s Spring Advocacy Push** By MOAA Staff, Feb 07, 2024

This online article will inform you of the three issue areas comprising the 2024 Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign, which will take place in Washington DC, the week of April 15, 2024, and how you can get involved, including using MOAA’s Legislative Action Center, <https://moaa.quorum.us/>.

Read the full article in the link below and please get involved and Take Action Now!

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/tricare-for-life,-star-act,-housing-help-will-anchor-moaas-spring-advocacy-push/>

### **Legislative Corner... Take Action!**

<https://www.moaa.org>  
<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

As noted above, advocacy is the name of the game for legislative issues concerning veteran earned benefits. MOAA's voice on these matters is preeminent, as they have been ranked a Top Lobbyist in the Grass Roots category by *The Hill* for 17 years in a row!

This doesn't happen in a vacuum; there is strength in numbers; your voice and action on the issues is ultimately what counts.

How can you help? Use MOAA's Legislative Action Center as outlined below:

From the MOAA Home Page: click on Advocacy, then on Legislative Action Center. Then click on the "Sign Up" button in the upper right corner of the page. Once there you will see the Active Legislative Campaigns MOAA is engaged in with prepared letters you can send directly to your legislative representatives. You may send them unamended or add reasons from your own experience why you would support that issue.

Need help? Please contact Barb Green, GVC Legislative Chair, @ [bgreen@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:bgreen@gvcmoaa.org).

### **GVC Support Coordinators**

If you need help, contact Nancy Swanson, (585) 944-5637, or myself, Tim Vaughan, (585) 412-6425. We may not be able to help you directly or in person, but we both have "been around the block" so-to-speak and may be able to coordinate help, support or information you are looking for or may need.

### **Your Chapter Dues at Work...**

GVC continues to make donations to Honor Flight Rochester, the Veterans Outreach Center,

Wreaths Across America and The MOAA Foundation. Additionally, we have provided MOAA ROTC/JROTC awards to cadets/midshipmen at U of R, RIT, Brockport, Northeast College Preparatory High School and Rochester Early College International High School. Again, we are grateful for the support of our membership toward these programs.

### **2024 GVC Chapter Dues**

Have you paid your 2024 chapter dues? GVC annual chapter dues are \$25/year. If you are not sure of your status, please reach out to Norma Weissend at [nweissend@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:nweissend@gvcmoaa.org). Paid your dues already? We sincerely thank you!

### **Surviving Spouse Liaison**

Kathy Green is the chapter's Surviving Spouse Liaison (SSL). You may contact Kathy at, [kgreen@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:kgreen@gvcmoaa.org).

### **Surviving Spouse Membership**

A MOAA member's Life membership will transfer to the surviving spouse upon a death notification to the MOAA Member Service Center (800) 234-6622 or [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org). Similarly, the remainder of a Premium membership also transfers until expiration. Premium memberships may be renewed or upgraded to Life membership. Each spouse has their own MOAA member number.

Additionally, surviving spouses are invited to join the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, which provides a common space for surviving spouses across the country to connect with one another and communicate about challenges and resources available for adjusting to a new life. You can reach out to the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter by emailing [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com).

### **From the Surviving Spouse Corner:**

#### **Know Your Benefits**

Pat Green, Jan 30, 2024

Many states have made legislative decisions that show appreciation for the sacrifices of servicemembers and veterans and their survivors. Benefits differ in each state, though.

To know what the benefits are in your state, you need to do homework. Your research could result in monetary savings and opportunities.

Below are some resources and places to start.

**Veterans Service Office:** There might be printed materials that enumerate county and state benefits for surviving spouses.

**MOAA Council and Chapter Legislative Chairs:** Ask about benefits they are aware of that apply to surviving spouses.

**County Property Appraiser:** Ask about a homestead exemption, a widow (widower) exemption, or an over age 65 exemption on your property tax or school tax. If income caps apply, what are your state's limits and guidelines? In Florida, for example, there is a homestead, widow, and age exemption and property taxes on homesteaded homes. In addition, the property tax for homesteaded homes of disabled veterans is reduced by the same percentage of the disabilities affecting the veteran as certified by the VA. In Florida, that benefit passes to the unremarried surviving spouse and is transportable to a downsized home.

**State Legislator.** If you have income tax in your state, some or all of your military retirement pay, or Surviving Benefit Plan may be deducted from your reported income. Ask about any other benefits from the state.

**Mayor's Office.** Call and ask about the benefits the city offers.

Aside from taxes, some additional areas to explore are scholarship opportunities for surviving spouses and dependent children; state, county, or city policies giving employment and/or promotion preference to a surviving spouse; portability of a professional license or forgiveness of fees; and discounts on passes to parks and museums.

About the author: Pat Green is a member of MOAA's Surviving Spouse Advisory Council. She has been active and engaged member of

MOAA for 15 years, serving in many leadership roles.

Link to the above article:

[MOAA - Surviving Spouse Corner: Know Your Benefits](#)

## **Planning Ahead for a VA Cemetery Burial**

By: Kate Horrell, Jan 31, 2024

Burial in a cemetery associated with the VA is important to many veterans. It honors their military service, plus it can decrease the costs of their final arrangements.

However, jumping through the VA's eligibility determination can be hard for a grieving family. If a veteran chooses to, the veteran can make the process easier for their survivors by obtaining a Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery.

In general, veterans and servicemembers and their spouses and certain children might be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. The qualifying veteran must not have received a dishonorable discharge.

Spouses may be buried in a VA cemetery even if they remarry after the veteran's death. Minor children are eligible, as are some unmarried adult children.

The VA requires a form and documentation to verify eligibility to be buried in a VA cemetery. Verifying your eligibility in advance will make the process smoother for your survivors. In addition, it will help you make other decisions about your final wishes. If you are pre-planning and pre-paying your arrangements, a pre-need determination can help you know what services you will need to plan and pay for.

Note that filling out this form in advance is optional. If the task isn't done before the veteran dies, survivors just need to provide the veteran's DD Form 214 to the funeral director. The funeral director can then handle coordinating the veteran's burial in a national VA cemetery.

For those who choose to plan in advance, to obtain this documentation, you will need to fill out an application for pre-need determination of eligibility. [This can be done online](#) (there is an option to do it without logging into your VA account), or you can print, fill in, and mail a paper copy ([download it here](#)). You will need your DD Form 214 or other separation documents. Once the VA has reviewed your application, you will receive a written determination via the regular mail.

When you receive your determination, add this to your burial planning paperwork. When it is necessary, your survivor or the assisting funeral director will call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117. Having a pre-need determination of eligibility should eliminate the need for a new application and extra paperwork.

While a pre-need determination will speed the process, it does not guarantee which national cemetery you will be buried in. Availability will be assessed at the time of need.

Link to the above article:

[MOAA - Planning Ahead for a VA Cemetery Burial](#)

### **GVC/MOAA BOARD MEMBERS 2023-2025**

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**Past President:**

Peter Ingalsbe, COL, USA (Ret)

Email: [pingalsbe@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:pingalsbe@gvcmoaa.org)

**Surviving Spouse Liaison:** Kathy Green

Email: [kgreen@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:kgreen@gvcmoaa.org)

**Transition Liaison:**

Tim Vaughan, Col, USAF (Ret)

Email: [tvaughan@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:tvaughan@gvcmoaa.org)

**Your MOAA & GVC Membership Matters!**

**Tim Vaughan, Col, USAF (Retired)**

**MOAA GVC President**

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**GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER  
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**>>> \*\*\* SATURDAY \*\*\* <<< March 23, 2024**

**Ferris Goodridge American Legion Post #330 Spencerport**

**691 Trimmer Rd, Spencerport NY 14559**

**1300 - Social Hour (Cash Bar)**

**1400 - Dinner**

**Buffet Dinner / \$35 each**

Sliced Roast Beef w/Gravy,  
Chicken French,  
Pasta w/Meatless Marinara Sauce

All meals come with:  
Salad, Vegetable, Mashed Potatoes and  
Dessert Cake  
Coffee, Tea and Cash Bar

**GVC MOAA ROTC/JROTC  
AWARDS DINNER  
Honoring Army, Navy & Air Force  
Cadets/Midshipmen  
from  
UR, RIT & SUNY Brockport;  
Rochester ECI HS &  
Rochester Leadership Academy**

**Reservations due ASAP, but NLT Wednesday March 13, 2024**

Cancellations NLT 1200 hours, Monday, March 18, 2024

Questions: Jean (716) 239-0383; [jvaughan@gvcmoaa.org](mailto:jvaughan@gvcmoaa.org)

**PLEASE CLIP HERE AND SEND FORM BELOW \*\*\* DRESS: BUSINESS \*\*\***

**RESERVATION FORM FOR >> SATURDAY March 23, 2024 << GVC MEETING at  
Ferris Goodridge American Legion Post #330, 691 Trimmer Rd, Spencerport NY 14559**

**ALL Name(s) Attending:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check included for** \_\_\_\_\_ **Meal(s) at \$35.00 each, Meal(s) Total \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor ROTC/JROTC Cadets/Midshipmen Family Dinners \$** \_\_\_\_\_;

**MOAA Foundation Donation \$** \_\_\_\_\_; **Grand Total \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **GVC MOAA** and mail to:

**GVC MOAA  
c/o Jean Vaughan  
3464 Lincoln Hill Rd  
Canandaigua, NY 14424**

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**Genesee Valley Chapter  
Military Officers Assn of America  
PO Box 20874  
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**February 2024 Newsletter**

**First Class Mail**



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