

# NEW YORK STATE CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*The NYS Capital District Chapter and the Military Officers Association of America are non-partisan member organizations that honor, assist, and advocate for all who serve and have served honorably in the uniformed services of the United States of America.*



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**5-Star Chapter – 2024**

5-Star Chapter: 2021, 2020, 2018 & 2017

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*(More photos from the convention will be available later.*

*Check our website, social media, and the next newsletter.)*

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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Our next Chapter meeting is **SUNDAY,**  
**OCTOBER 26, at NORRINE'S RESTUARANT**

405 Hudson River Rd, Waterford, NY 12188

(a.k.a. Routes 4 & 32, in the town of Halfmoon)

GUEST SPEAKER: **MG JOHN ANDONIE**, recently retired, whose last duty assignment was Commander of the D.C. National Guard

Please invite officers whom you know who are not members of MOAA or not Chapter members. Tell them about MOAA and our Chapter and hand them a membership application (or send them this link): [Joint MOAA-Chapter Membership Application](#)

**DRESS CODE:** Business casual (jackets, ties, & dresses optional, but no jeans, please)

### **PROGRAM:**

1300 hrs: Check-in; Buy your 50/50 tickets; Mix & mingle

1330 hrs: Welcome; Pledge of Allegiance; Prayer for Service Members

1345-1400 hrs: Entrées served

about 1445 hrs: Guest Speaker presentation

1545-1600 hrs: 50/50 drawing; announcements and farewell

You can park on the side lot near the entrance which also has a couple of Handicap Parking spaces, or behind the restaurant. The lots are not paved. The entrance has a wheelchair ramp.

### **ENTRÉE SELECTIONS (choose one):**

**STEAK** w/potatoes & veggies

**CHICKEN PARM** over pasta w/garlic bread

**HADDOCK** (lightly breaded & seasoned) w/linguini and white wine buttery lemon sauce

*With the meal:* Salad, dessert, coffee, tea, and soft drinks

*Also available:* Wine, beer, adult beverages are available at the bar. You may pay as you go or ask for an individual tab.

**COST:** **\$40 per person**, members and guests.

**RESERVATIONS AND ENTRÉE SELECTION(S) REQUIRED NLT Friday, OCT 17<sup>th</sup>** because we owe the restaurant a final count of guests and entrée selections one week in advance. You may ...

Make your reservation *before* the deadline by selecting your entrée(s) and paying through the Cheddar Up online payment platform, which you can access here: <https://treas-4444.mycheddarup.com>. Or here: <https://chapter-luncheon-26-oct-2025.cheddarup.com>. Or,

Email your reservation and entrée selection(s) to AL MEMOLE at [pres@cdnymoaa.org](mailto:pres@cdnymoaa.org) or [ammemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammemole@gmail.com), or call Al at 518-641-8664 *before* the deadline (please leave a voice message), and pay when you arrive at the meeting. **DO NOT MAIL A RESERVATION AND CHECK**, because Al will not be able to access his snail mail in the weeks leading up to the deadline.

## Legislative Affairs Committee Report

(Submitted by Pat Piccirilli, Legislative Affairs Committee)

Congress faces mounting obstacles to avoid a shutdown. Lawmakers are working on a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to extend funding into November, but divisions in both chambers threaten progress. Both parties appear entrenched, raising the likelihood of a shutdown even as leaders on both sides acknowledge it would damage national security and political stability.

**NDA News:** As of late September 2025, the House of Representatives passed its version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), while the Senate's version is awaiting a full floor debate. The final law will be determined after a conference committee reconciles the two differing versions.

A MOAA-backed bill which would keep paychecks coming for servicemembers and many service-connected civilians if the government shuts down had more than 55 cosponsors as of Sept. 23, showing bipartisan support to shield the total force from budget fallout.

The **Pay Our Troops Act of 2026 (H.R. 5401)** would allow the government to use funds “not otherwise appropriated” to cover pay and allowances for armed services personnel as well as civilians and contractors supporting those in uniform. The legislation “provides the financial certainty military families deserve, protecting them from the instability of government shutdowns while they protect us,” said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), in a news release announcing the bill’s Sept. 16 introduction. While the legislation would cover Coast Guard members, it does *not* ensure continued paychecks for members of the commissioned corps of the U.S. Public Health Service or NOAA. The Pay Our Troops Act offers some stability to many who wear the uniform (and their families) as the budget situation remains unclear. **Ask your legislators to prioritize this fix today.**

In addition to the above news we are still in the final throes of our summer campaign and advocating for:

1. Passing the Richard Starr Act;
2. Improving TRICARE for families, and finally
3. Supporting Military Spouse Employment.

**How can we help?** Go to the **Legislative Action Center** ([www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction)), if you haven’t already done so. Use the Legislative Action Center when contacting your legislators regarding military related issues. Or if you prefer, you can call MOAA’s Capitol Hotline at **866-272-MOAA (6622)**, a toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard, to connect directly with lawmakers. Ask to speak with the military legislative assistant or legislative director. If neither staff is available, ask to schedule a follow-up call when they are available. One other resource for keeping up to date with legislation and happenings on Capitol Hill is [www.moaa.org/advocacy-news](http://www.moaa.org/advocacy-news).

**MOAA is NOT an organization of officers concerned *only* about officers. We are an organization of officers dedicated to protecting the earned benefits and welfare of ALL RANKS in all of the uniformed services.**

**Remaining Chapter Meetings For 2025**

Please mark your calendars!

MEETING DATE & TYPE	MEETING LOCATION, NOTES
NOV 22, Board of Directors Meeting	NYS Military Museum, Saratoga Springs, 1000-1200
DEC 6, Holiday Party-Annual Business Mtg	Norrine's restaurant, Waterford

**\*\*\* PROPOSED Chapter Meetings For 2026 \*\*\***

**We still need your input on meetings for next year.**

You may email Al Memole, Chapter President ([pres@cdnymoaa.org](mailto:pres@cdnymoaa.org)), or call him (518-641-8664).

We want to hear YOUR ideas first of all, but we need to know:

- Do you prefer our traditional five luncheon meetings, or a mix of different types of meetings on different days?
- If you prefer sticking with our traditional luncheons meetings with guest speakers, do Saturdays work for you, or would you prefer a different day of the week? Are luncheon's okay, or would you prefer brunch in the morning or dinner in the evening?
- If you're game to try a new approach, what kinds of meetings or activities would you participate in? What types of events/activities are you willing to coordinate for the Chapter?

If a majority of members who respond want a new approach in place of traditional meetings, the Board of Directors will develop a schedule for 2026 by the November 22 Board Meeting based on your input.

**TWO OPTIONS FOR CHAPTER MEETINGS**

OPTION 1 – TRADITIONAL [PROPOSED 2026 SCHEDULE]	OPTION 2 – A NEW APPROACH [CONCEPTUAL]
Saturday, February 7, luncheon	<b>Board of Directors meetings:</b> same as proposed
Saturday, April 18, luncheon April 25, Board of Directors	<b>Brunch/Lunch/Dinner Meetings:</b> Three events, suggested for March, June, and December
Saturday, June 6, luncheon	<b>Guest speakers open to the public:</b> Up to four events, one per quarter, each at a different venue around the Capital region
August TBD, Board of Directors	<b>Service projects:</b> Wreaths Across America (placement in December, pick up in March), Toys For Tots warehouse (November), <u>other ideas?</u>
Saturday, October 3, luncheon	<b>Outings:</b> Museum visits, MWR tours, sporting events (ValleyCats, horse races, West Point football), picnics, outdoor activities (golf, hiking, cycling, paddling, snowshoeing, skiing, etc.)
November 21, Board of Directors	<b>OTHER:</b> What do you propose?
Saturday, December 5, luncheon (Holiday Party-Annual Business Mtg)	

## Chapter Due\$ - News

We will open the 2026 annual dues collection in Cheddar Up by **Nov 1**. Chapter dues are still \$30 for all regular Chapter members under the age of 85. Members 85 and older and surviving spouses are exempt. Dues cover Chapter operating expenses and obligations and allow us to support worthy local charities.

Cheddar Up is a secure online payment platform offered by MOAA free of charge for all affiliated Chapters and state Councils. It makes paying easy for members who have no issues paying by credit card – no need to write checks or pay cash.

## NY COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS ANNUAL CONVENTION 2025 - Report

*(Submitted by Al Memole, Chapter President)*

THIS ARTICLE IS GEARED TOWARD THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND.

The 2025 Convention just ended on October 1 as the **MOAA President & CEO, Brian Kelly (“BK”)**, Lt Gen USAF RET, his lovely wife Garrety, and the last remaining attendees said our good-byes after breakfast at the Inn at Saratoga. **Fifteen** members and five spouses from our Chapter attended all or parts of the event – an excellent turnout. We all had a great time reconnecting with friends from other chapters and making new friends. We had a lot of laughs, but we also gathered a lot of useful information. Here are just some of the highlights and key take-aways:

### MOAA

- MOAA has excelled with our advocacy program but we still have unmet objectives.
- Chapters are the “boots on the ground”, the lifeblood of MOAA, but *only 8% of MOAA members belong to Chapters*. Even though we’re punching above our weight, we need to get more MOAA members engaged at the local level.
- MOAA is providing outstanding leadership and support to us. We are *extremely* fortunate to have:
  - **Frank “Tank” Michael**, CAPT USN RET, in charge of affiliated Councils and Chapters. He truly loves NY, loves to visit our chapters, makes it to every annual NY convention, and is super responsive to whatever we need.
  - **BK**. His pride and enthusiasm for MOAA, its mission, and its members, is contagious. His sights are set on MOAA’s future (which is what a great CEO does), how we can grow, and become more effective in protecting the earned benefits of all who have served. He and Garrety stayed for the whole convention and even went on the tours. He is very personable, attentive, and approachable – all-around impressive!

### COUNCIL

- Our own **Skip Bebernitz** completed his second and last term as President of the NY Council of Chapters. He inherited an effective and well-run organization and made it even better. **Chris Costigan**, also from our Chapter, completed his term as Eastern Region Vice President, succeeded by another of our members, **Vince Memole** (my cousin), who stepped up to fill the need.

*Continued on next page*

- A new slate of Council officers was elected for 2025-2027, and the officers sworn in:

POSITION	ELECTED OFFICER	CHAPTER
<b>President</b>	Norma Weissend, Lt Col USAF RET	Genesee Valley
<b>Vice President</b>	Timothy R. Vaughn, COL USAF RET	Genesee Valley
<b>Eastern Region VP</b>	Vincent A. Memole, Jr., LTC USA RET	Capital District
<b>Western Region VP</b>	Keith Harris, CDR USN RET	Genesee Valley
<b>Secretary</b>	*Suzann Hensley, Lt Col USAF RET	Central NY
<b>Treasurer</b>	*Jamie Scotland, Lt Col USAF RET	Western NY

\* Re-elected

- Council is financially sound. Major tasks for 2026 are to reset chapter catchment area boundaries by ZIP code after the Greater Rome-Utica Chapter deactivated, prepare for Advocacy in Action 2026, and *plan the next convention*.

CHAPTERS

- Six of the seven NY chapters were represented at the convention; only Lower Hudson was absent. All of the six chapters are doing well and are actively engaged in the MOAA mission, but all are struggling with recruitment and retention of members and leadership succession planning.
- BK and Tank presented the certificates and flag streamer pins to the Council and to Chapters who earned MOAA Levels of Excellence (LOE) and COL Marvin J. Harris Communication awards for websites and newsletters, which were announced a few months ago. Our Chapter earned the five-star LOE and five-star communications awards for website and newsletter for 2024.



STATE & LOCAL

- **State Senator Jacob Ashby**, 43<sup>rd</sup> District, was guest speaker at the Welcome Buffet Dinner on Sunday. Senator Ashby was a Captain in the Army Reserve, and served in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs. He reviewed the accomplishments of our State Legislature in support of veterans and military families, pointing out how their Committee is one of the few that has consistent bipartisan agreement on most issues.



*Continued on next page*

Top: Lt Gen Kelly (right) presents the 5-star LOE award to Chapter President Al Memole (photo by Timmy Ray Vaughn)  
 Bottom: NY State Senator Jake Ashby with two of his constituents, Mary & Al Memole (photo by Norma Weissend)

- Chapter member **Mark O'Rourke, Tim Holmes, and special guest Joe Taluto, MG USA RET**, representing the *Friends of the New York State Military Museum*, located in Saratoga Springs, promoted the museum as a unique asset for New York (which it is). They announced plans to create a **Global War on Terror (GWOT) exhibit**, to include a mobile display to tour around the state. The GWOT exhibit will honor the New Yorkers, NY units, and NY families involved in and impacted by America's longest conflict. It is also intended to educate young people in the upcoming generations of the sacrifices made to safeguard America and our freedom. The hope is that it will also kindle the spark of patriotism and help recruiting, not only for the military services, but also for veterans' service organizations like ours.

THE EVENT

- This convention would *not* have happened without the hard work and dedication of following individuals:
  - **Skip Bebernitz**, as Council President, who selected the site and made the initial coordination with the venue, and arranged for the guest speaker.
  - **Christine Richardson** of our Chapter who helped Skip, worked out details with the venue, and made arrangements for the tours and transportation. Her husband, **Lance**, a member of our Board of Directors, led the tour group.
  - **Norma Weissend**, as Council VP (now the President), handled communications with MOAA and the Chapters, all of the reservations, and the agenda.
  - **Peggy Phillips**, of Southern Tier Chapter and Immediate Past Council President, honchoed the nominating committee for the election of Council officers.
  - **Timmy Ray and Jean Vaughn** set up and managed the Hospitality ("Training") Suite where attendees mingled after the meals, meetings, and tours.
- Accommodations were quite nice. Meals were very good. The Inn at Saratoga strives to retain the look and feel of the Victorian era. As locals, we would never have taken the opportunity to stay there if it weren't for the convention.
- Monday Sep 29 was dedicated to presentations, the Council's business meeting, and the banquet. On Tuesday, the 30<sup>th</sup>, a gorgeous fall day, we went to the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery for a memorial service for Chapter members who died this past year. Then we went on a guided tour of the Saratoga Battlefield, the Schuyler House, the Battlefield Monument, and the Surrender Site, with a lunch stop at the Schuylerville American Legion Post 278.
- In addition to attendees from the six NY chapters, we had attendees from USAA (Karen & Mike McCoy), Martins Point (TRICARE), Long Island, the New Hampshire Council, the Florida Council, and, also from Florida, **Bob and Barbara Bienvenue**.



Bob was a member of the Western NY Chapter, and a former Council President. *At our Convention, BK presented Bob with the prestigious Col. Steve Strobbridge Legislative Chair/Liaison Award.*

Above: Saratoga Battlefield Monument, Schuylerville; At Left: Conventioneers visit the Nielson House on Saratoga Battlefield Park. (Photos by Al Memole)

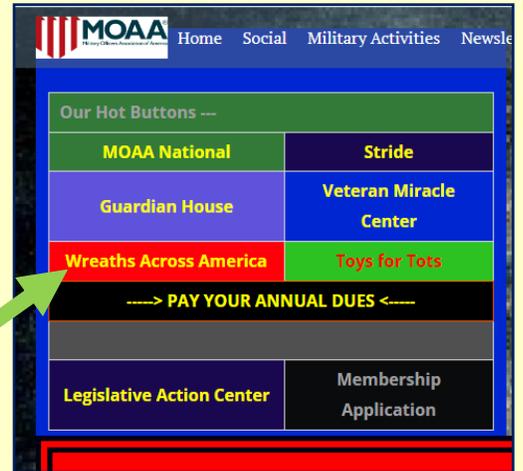
# HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue ➔

## WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™

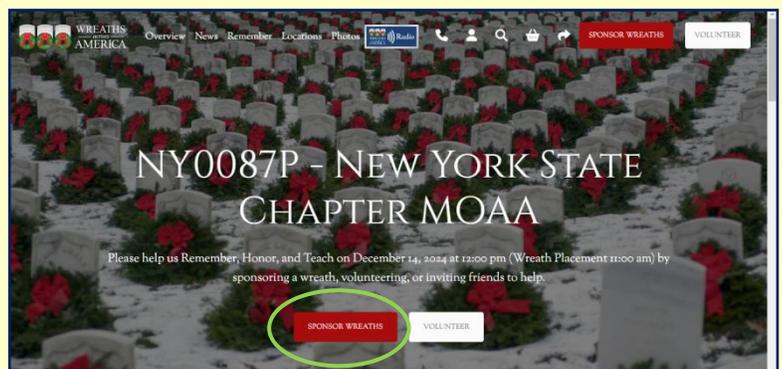
Wreaths Across America™ (WAA) is a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to **Remember, Honor, and Teach** Americans of all ages about the sacrifices made by those who served in the Armed Forces of our nation.

**HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE:**

1. **SPONSOR WREATHS.** Please ask your families, friends, local organizations and businesses to sponsor wreaths *through our Chapter*. The cost to sponsor a single wreath is **\$17**. Donors may sponsor one or more wreaths by mailing a check along with the form on pg. 11 of this newsletter to WAA at their Maine address, **OR, better yet, through the WAA website**. The *quickest and EASIEST* way to access the WAA website is through our own Chapter website clicking on the Wreaths Across America “Hot Button” in the upper left corner of the home page, as indicated at the right. This will open a new tab where you will “Click Here ...”, to open our Chapter’s WAA page with our group code **NY0087P**. Wreaths sponsored through us are designated for placement at the *Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery*, located at 200 Duell Rd, Schuylerville, NY. For each wreath sponsored through our Chapter, WAA returns \$5 to us, *which we give back to the community donating to other worthy local charities benefitting the local veterans and and military-related historical organizations.*



2. **LAY WREATHS ON VETERANS' GRAVES.** There are over 17,000 veteran graves at the Saratoga National Cemetery. *We encourage all of you to attend the ceremony and help place wreaths if you are able.* This year’s wreath laying event at Saratoga will be held on **Saturday, December 13**. **Wreath placement begins at 11:00 AM**, followed by a solemn memorial ceremony honoring the fallen and deceased veterans of each military service at the flagpole **at 12:00 noon**. This is a very moving experience.



Continued on next page

**CHAPTER WREATH SPONSORSHIP GOALS:** Our objectives are to *sponsor 400 or more wreaths* and to *get more members to solicit sponsors from our communities*. Last year, our Chapter sponsored a total of **222 wreaths**, which tied us for **70<sup>th</sup>** place among all organizations that solicit wreath donations in New York state and tied us for **1,574<sup>th</sup>** place among all organizations nationwide – an improvement in all three over 2023. This year, as of October 2, 7,718 wreaths have been sponsored for placement at the Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, which is 45.8% of the total needed. That means there are *9,282 more wreaths needed* to make sure every veteran is honored. **So far, 31 wreaths have already been sponsored through our Chapter. It's not too early to solicit donors!**

## OTHER NEWS & EVENTS OF INTEREST

*Here are just a few of the advertised local events and services that might be of interest to military personnel, veterans, and their families*



**VFW POST 7466**  
 25 VETERAN STREET, POESTENKILL, NY  
 FOR MORE INFORMATION: 518-860-4173

# STOP 22

## END VETERAN SUICIDE

### October 18, 2025

**REGISTRATION  
 STARTS AT 1130 AM  
 \$1 PER PERSON**

**WE WILL KICK OFF AT 1230 PM WITH A 22  
 MINUTE WALK FOLLOWED BY FOOD, MUSIC  
 AND A HORSESHOE TOURNAMENT**

CASH BAR AVAILABLE

**ENTERTAINERS INCLUDE:**  
 ROCKY SAWYER  
 FRANKIE LESSARD  
 JOHN DALOIA  
 MATTY D





*250th Marine Corps Birthday Ball  
Capital Region Toys for Tots Fundraiser*

**Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
5:00pm - 11:00pm  
**The Hangar at 743**  
743 Albany Shaker Road  
Latham, NY 12110

Many never have the chance to experience the time-honored tradition of the Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

This year, as we commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, we are honored to bring this celebration to military, veterans, and civilians around Capital Region.

Join us for an evening steeped in tradition, camaraderie, and celebration, all while raising funds to support local children in need.

Be part of a night that honors the past, celebrates the present, and gives hope for the future.

**Tickets - \$125 Per Guest**  
Dress Code: Formal Black-Tie, Military Dress Uniforms Encouraged

To Sponsor or Purchase Tickets: <https://forms.gle/1S2qpscon2M2PCDX8>  
or email Shelby at [shansen@capitalregiontoysfortots.org](mailto:shansen@capitalregiontoysfortots.org)

*This historic evening will include cocktail hour with appetizers, cash bar, the traditional USMC birthday ball ceremony, dinner, dessert, photos, and dancing.*

Discounted room blocks, complimentary shuttle to and from the event, and 50% off breakfast available at Hilton Garden Inn Albany Airport.  
State you are with the Toys for Tots Ball when booking.



**NOV 9:..26<sup>th</sup> Annual Free Rensselaer County Veterans Breakfast** at the Melvin Roads American Legion Post #1231, 200 Columbia Tpk., Rensselaer, NY. *Please call 518-270-2760 for more info.*

**November 20<sup>th</sup>** is the deadline for submitting **news articles, photos, bio's, stories, trip reports, or reviews of books/movies/food/drink** for the *next* issue! Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at [ammmemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammmemole@gmail.com).



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Wreath Sponsorship Order Form

Sponsored wreaths are placed on grave markers at state and national veterans' cemeteries, as well as at local and community cemeteries each December for National Wreaths Across America Day.

Your donation will ensure the placement of a veteran's wreath for one or more veterans laid to rest at the participating location of your choice.

All sponsored veteran wreaths are shipped directly to the location selected by the sponsor on this form. Wreaths are not shipped to individual wreath sponsors.

Please make checks payable to:  
**Wreaths Across America**  
 PO Box 249  
 Columbia Falls, ME 04623

Call 877-385-9504 with any questions.  
 Thank you for your sponsorship and for joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach!

SPONSORSHIP TYPE	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Individual = 1 Wreath	\$17.00		
Family = 4 Wreaths	\$68.00		
Small Business = 10 Wreaths	\$170.00		
Corporate = 100 Wreaths	\$1,700.00		

For quicker processing and the convenience of paying with a credit card, debit card, Google Pay, or PayPal, veteran wreaths may be sponsored online by scanning the QR Code above or by visiting: [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/NY0087P](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/NY0087P)

You should be the only one to enter your credit card information at checkout on the Wreaths Across America website. For your security, do not share this information with anyone else who offers to place an order for you. To verify the validity of the QR Code, always check that wreathscrossamerica.org is part of the web address when sponsoring wreaths online.

If you prefer to pay with a check, please complete this form and mail it along with your check to Wreaths Across America at the address listed in the box above.

CHECK #	CHECK DATE	SPONSOR NAME FOR DISPLAY <i>If different than name on check.</i>
GROUP ID(s)	NY0087P	EMAIL ADDRESS
LOCATION ID(s)	NYGSNS	PHONE #
DOLLAR AMOUNTS(s)		MAILING ADDRESS

To split your donation between multiple groups and/or locations, please list the IDs and dollar amounts for each.

**SPECIAL REQUESTS**

Please note in memory/honor of requests do not place a wreath on a specific loved one's grave.

<b>IN MEMORY OF REQUEST</b>	The "In Memory Of" Name will be listed on the Wreaths Across America online Remember Wall, along with your personal message.
<b>NAME FOR MEMORY WALL POST</b>	
<b>SPONSOR EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	
<b>MESSAGE (optional)</b>	

<b>IN HONOR OF REQUEST</b>	An email will be sent to your chosen recipient from Wreaths Across America letting them know of your donation of sponsored veteran wreaths in their honor.
<b>RECIPIENT NAME</b>	
<b>RECIPIENT EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	
<b>MESSAGE (optional)</b>	

Thank you for supporting our mission to REMEMBER, HONOR, and TEACH!

**CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2025-2027**

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT
President	Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Kathy E. Gates, COL USA, RET
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary	Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET
Treasurer	Patrick J. Piccirilli, LTC USAR RET

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2025-2027**

Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR USNR RET	Ernest “Skip” Bebernitz**, MAJ USA RET
Christopher J. Costigan*, CDR USN RET	Anthony J. Ficara**, COL USA RET
Vincent A. Memole, Jr., LTC USAR RET	Edmund M. Scheiber, Jr.**, Lt Col USAF RET
Edward E. Balaban, LT USNR RET	Lance Richardson, MAJ USA RET

\* Immediate Past-President

\*\* Former President

## VIETNAM MOVING WALL

Sep 19-22, the **Vietnam Moving Wall** was displayed in Veterans Park, Bolton Landing, NY, courtesy of the Bolton Landing American Legion Post #961 and the Town of Bolton. The Wall is a half-sized replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. (Photos by Ed Scheiber, Chapter Board Member and member of Post 961)

