



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo presents Liberty Medals to Gold Star families

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO September 23, 2021

| ISSUE: **NYS LIBERTY MEDAL; GOLD STAR FAMILIES; MILITARY**



In recognition of Gold Star Mother's Day this Sunday, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, recently presented New York State Liberty Medals to several local Gold Star families at a special ceremony at the Innovare Advancement Center in Rome.

The Liberty Medal is given to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic or humanitarian acts and achievements.

The ceremony provided the opportunity to honor, recognize and remember individuals from the region who served in the nation's military and who made the ultimate sacrifice, including:

- United States Marine Corps (USMC) PFC Joseph Keith Wheeler, 18, of Utica, who was killed in action on March 31, 1968, in Vietnam.
- U.S. Army PFC Gregory Huxley Jr., 19, of Forestport, who was killed in action in Iraq on April 6, 2003.
- U.S. Army Capt. George Wood, 33, of Marcy, who was killed in action in Iraq on Nov. 20, 2003.
- USMC Sgt. Michael Uvanni, 27, of Rome, who was killed in action in Iraq on Oct. 1, 2004.
- U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alec Mazur, who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and was killed in a noncombat incident on March 9, 2005.
- USMC Sgt. Elisha Parker, 22, of Camden, who was killed in action May 4, 2006, in Iraq.
- Army Cpl. John Sigsbee, 21, of Waterville, who was killed in action on Jan. 16, 2008 in Iraq.
- U.S. Army Sgt. Chris Simpson, 23 who was killed in action in Iraq on March 17, 2008.
- USMC Lance Cpl. Daniel Geary, 22, of Rome, who was killed in action on March 20, 2009, in Afghanistan.
- USMC Lance Cpl. Blaise Oleski, 22, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on April 8, 2009.

- U.S. Army Spc. Blair Thompson, 19, who was killed on June 25, 2010, in Afghanistan.

“The sacrifices made by these men will never be forgotten, and we are all eternally grateful for their service to our nation,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “We also are forever indebted to all the parents who have lost a child in military service. It is important that we continue to support these families to show them that their child’s death was not in vain.”

Other attendees at the ceremony included Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente Jr., Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, Rome Mayor Jackie Izzo, Oneida County Sheriff Rob Maciol and Michael Stadelmaier from the office of Congresswoman Claudia Tenney, R-New Hartford. Air Force Research Lab Director Col. Fred E. Garcia II and Deputy Director Dr. Michael Hayduk, as well as EADS Canadian Detachment Commander Lt. Col Josh Klemen, also attended.

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