

**October 2025**

## ★ **Blue Star Mothers ROC** ★



We are mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and female legal guardians who have children serving in the military, guard or reserves, or children who are veterans. We support each other and our children while promoting patriotism. Our organization focuses on our mission every single day and will never, ever, forsake our troops, our veterans or the families of our Fallen Heroes.

### Meetings & Events

- \* BSM Meeting Oct 18th  
@9:30am Henrietta Ely  
Fagan American Legion  
260 Middle Rd Henrietta  
NY
- \* Future Strong Stars  
Nov 3rd @7-8pm Panera  
Bread 16 Courtney Drive  
Fairport
- \* Women Veterans' Coffee  
House: Nov 14th  
@5:30pm Ely Fagan  
American Legion. RSVP  
to 585-210-9779

### Upcoming Events

- \* Care Packages packing  
Nov 15th Details to follow
- \* Lights of Honor Dec 7th  
See page 2
- \* Wreaths Across America  
Dec 13th
- \* Army Navy Game Dec  
13th



## Gold Star Family Sunday

It was with much respect and honor that the Blue Star Mothers NY8 once again hosted a remembrance ceremony for local Gold Star Families on Sunday, September 28th. The names of local heroes who gave the ultimate sacrifice were read off and families in attendance were given a yellow rose. Many families brought pictures of their loved ones. The ceremony was held in the White Haven Chapel with the Patriot Guard, the Keystone Drum and Bagpipes and ROTC presenting the colors. The keynote speaker, Major Dylan Potter, US Army Ranger spoke of the strength and grace of the Gold Star Families and many carrying on spirit of in service in their communities.

# LIGHTS OF HONOR

## TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

### Honoring our Military Service Members and Veterans



#### BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF ROCHESTER NEW YORK CHAPTER 8

We invite everyone in the community to share this time to honor our military personnel, past and present. Remember to include parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses and friends. During the ceremony, one person representing each service branch will place an ornament on the tree - Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. Then an ornament will be placed to represent each of the major combat eras in our country's history - *et. al.* and finally an ornament will be placed for National recognition of military awards.

**When:** Sunday, December 7, 2025

**Where:** One War Memorial Square  
Rochester, NY 14614

**Time:** 2:00 pm

**What:** Each service branch and combat era will be honored by an ornament placed on the tree by a military person. At the end of the ceremony you may collect your keepsake ornament if you have ordered one.

**How:** Use this form to submit your pictures for the ornament to be prepared ahead of time. Additional copies of this form are available on our website:

[www.BlueStarMomsROC.com](http://www.BlueStarMomsROC.com)

#### LIGHTS OF HONOR Tree Lighting Ceremony Sunday, December 7, 2025

The Blue Star Mothers of Rochester will provide, at no cost to you, the original photo ornament to be hung on the trees at the War Memorial. These ornaments may be displayed annually on the Lights of Honor trees at the War Memorial during the month of December. You are invited back each year to hang those ornaments.

You may also order keepsake duplicate ornaments for \$15 each to bring home and hang on your tree or hand out as gifts. To order keepsake duplicate ornaments please contact us at [BlueStarMothersRoc@gmail.com](mailto:BlueStarMothersRoc@gmail.com) or Call (585) 210-9881.

#### Please e-mail or mail the following information:

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

To Honor (name) \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Era/Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_  
(WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, War on Terror, etc.)

#### Circle the appropriate status for this person:

**SILVER:** wounded in the line of duty

**GOLD:** died in the line of duty

**BLACK:** Missing in Action or Prisoner of War

**BLUE:** all other service members

#### Please circle medals awarded:

Medal of Honor, Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Navy Cross, etc.

Number of keepsake ornaments requested \_\_\_\_\_

**Information must be received by Nov 16th.**

#### E-mail digital (jpeg format) photos to:

[BlueStarMothersRoc@gmail.com](mailto:BlueStarMothersRoc@gmail.com)

Or Call (585) 210-9881 and leave a message and we will get back to you to discuss arrangements to get the picture.



# Blue Star Mothers ROC



## CARE PACKAGE DRIVE

*Help Us Send A Little Bit of Home to Our Deployed Military*

*Packages sent twice a year in June and November*

### Items Needed by 11/1/25 for November Packages

#### **Personal Care Items**

**Wet Wipes (No Wet Ones)**  
**Lip Balm/Chap Stick**  
**Gum**  
**Hygiene Products (Soap, Deodorant, Q-Tips, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, Foot Powder, Tissues)**  
**Black Cotton Socks**  
**Magazines (sports/fitness)**  
**Dryer sheets (used to put in boots)**  
**Playing Cards**  
**Cross word/Puzzles books**

#### **Snacks/Treats**

**Beef Jerky or Slim Jims**  
**Powdered Drink Mixes– single serve (Powerade, Gatorade, Crystal Light, Propel)**  
**Instant Coffee single serve packets**  
**Tea Bags / Hot Chocolate**  
**Oatmeal packets / individual boxes of cereal**  
**Granola Bars / Cereal Bars / Protein Bars**  
**Cookies (Individual packs of Oreos or cookies)**  
**Trail Mix/Nut Packets**  
**Pringles (snack size)**  
**Pretzels/Cheetos/Chex Mix/Crackers – snack size**  
**Candy**

**Save time and visit our Amazon BSM Roc NY8 Care Package Wishlist and purchase some items and have them shipped directly to us for packing.**



**Amazon Care Package Link: <https://a.co/auDQ1bo>**

**Blue Star Mothers NY8**  
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[www.bluestarmomsroc.com](http://www.bluestarmomsroc.com)  
Email: [president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us)  
Facebook: Blue Star Mothers Roc  
585-943-1252





# Care Package Event Checklist

Planning for success with more rigorous customs requirements from Custom and Border Protection and USPS (updated September 2025):



Note: USPS prohibits mailing hand sanitizer, aerosols, items with alcohol, and [other hazardous materials](#).

## Preplanning

1. **Set your date and find your space**
2. **Collect address (s)**
  - Check each zip code for base-specific restrictions
  - Group recipient's by like items / zip code restrictions
3. **Standardize donations and set deadlines**
  - Decide what you will pack and determine quantities
  - Aim for consistency: Items, sizes, quantities to simplify
  - Capture what you need for each item in advance
4. **Create your donation lists / links and share**
  - Consider Amazon list, donation link, etc.
  - Explain to donors that specific items simplifies customs compliance.
5. **Reassess and check in** - 1 to 3 weeks prior to packing
  - Order any additional items needed
  - Make sure you have enough paper or labels (multiple labels per box are likely)

## Customs Compliance is Mandatory

As of 9/1/25 each item will require:

- Detailed Description
- HS Code
- Quantity
- Weight
- Country of Origin

## Packing Plan

1. **Create your labels** (Ship Thrifty allows you to save labels, do customs ahead of time, and copy labels and customs for the same or different people)
  - Reminder you may have multiple labels per box - multiples must be kept with the original (it goes with the tracking number so sort and separate carefully)
  - Make sure you have enough labels (or paper) to print the labels and customs continuation forms
  - Plan for package pickup or drop off (fill out the USPS pickup form if you want them to pickup)
2. **Prepare your space**
  - Setup tables (clearly separate items and write down how many should go in each box)
  - Talk with volunteers about the process (adding extra items can cause non-refundable returns)
  - Thank people for donations but remove random ones from the packing space
  - Put designated volunteers on label duty (be sure they know to keep them in order with the original label if multiples)

- **Celebrate and clean up**



**Have questions or need help? Reach out at any time!**

Meeting: [calendly.com/shipthrifty](https://calendly.com/shipthrifty)

Call us: 800-544-4992

Email us: [contactus@shipthrifty.com](mailto:contactus@shipthrifty.com)

# **NEW SHIPPING RULES FOR PACKAGES WITH APO/FPO ADDRESSES**

**Effective September 1, 2025 there are new rules for completing the custom forms if you are mailing packages out of the U.S., that includes APO and FPO addresses.**

Each package will need a detailed customs form filled out, it can NO LONGER BE HAND WRITTEN. You will need to have for each item in the package a detailed description of the item, its tariff code, the weight of each individual item, the cost of each individual item, how many of each item and the country of origin or the item i.e. where was it made. You will need to bring the list of this information to the post office so the postal clerk can enter the information electronically to produce the custom form. The postal clerk WILL NOT look up the individual tariff codes for you. This on-line site can be used to look up tariff codes <https://hts.usitc.gov/> For example the tariff code for a toothbrush is 9603.21.00.00, shampoo is 3305.10.00, cookies is 1905.31.00. Keep in mind you will need to do research also on where the item came from. Also keep in mind though the packages to our service members stay within the military postal system you need to be aware of the restrictions for items going into foreign countries. The USPS lists the restrictions by country on this website <https://www.usps.com/international/shipping-restrictions.htm> Please be aware of these restrictions as you do not want your service member getting in trouble for items you should not be sending.



The Rochester Blue Star Mothers shared their mission and lots of fun items for the military kids and their families at the Military Appreciation Day at Stokoe Farms on September 21st. Community partners that also participated includes The Vet Center, Veterans Outreach Center, The Red Cross, CompeerCORPS, VA programs: Whole Health and Women's Health and the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency Nature Based Therapy Program.

## Eagle Star Housing

Eagle Star Housing will be opening a new housing facility for veterans in Rochester. Eagle Star House has been helping veterans and individuals experiencing housing instability become self-sufficient in Upstate New York since 2012. The Permanent Supportive Apartment Program will offer 42 supportive and affordable apartments for Veterans experiencing housing instability. On-site supportive services will be provided by full-time Eagle Star Housing staff. Services will include: Rental Subsidy, Fully furnished apartment, Case management, Individual and group meetings, Support obtaining employment and/or further job training, Linkages to community resources, income and health insurance, and Life skills and budgeting groups. Transportation assistance for appointments. Regular activities, including game and movie nights, are organized by Eagle Star Housing staff.



# Volunteer Opportunities

Our chapter grows and is able to help more service members, veterans and military families because of volunteers. We need the support of all members, associate members, and those thankful for our military to have successful events like The Veteran Stand Down, Lights of Honor, Care Packages etc. Please look at the opportunities below, see how you can help. Our kids stood up and volunteered, now we need YOU to do the same.

**Military Baby Shower:** Annual in April, a community baby shower for military and veteran families expecting a child or have an infant less than 6 months old. Help needed: collect shower gifts, ask for donations, create baskets, support at event: decorating, picking up food items, welcoming moms, serving food, set-up/clean-up. Contact Amy VanDerwerken at [president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) or Jill Harris at [1vp.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:1vp.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) to volunteer.

**Care Packages:** Boxes packed/mailed in June & November to service members deployed overseas. Help needed: solicit postal addresses for deployed service members, collect care package items, promote our Amazon gift list for needed care package items. Friday night before packing: set-up of donated items. Saturday morning: put together mailing boxes, fill boxes, seal boxes. Contact Debbie Trevett at [treas.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:treas.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) or Kathy Dodsworth at [kdodsworth@frontiernet.net](mailto:kdodsworth@frontiernet.net) to volunteer.

**Veteran Women's Coffee House:** Monthly get-together for veteran women. Dinner is served. Help needed: preparing food for dinner, set-up/clean-up. CoChairs are Nancy Bird and Dory Braun. Contact Dory Braun at [dbraun4@gmail.com](mailto:dbraun4@gmail.com) to volunteer.

**Webster Garlic Fest** Annual in September. Contact Cherie Wood at [WebsterGarlicFest@gmail.com](mailto:WebsterGarlicFest@gmail.com) to get involved in this stinkin good time.

**Veteran Stand Down:** Organized annually by Veteran Outreach Center in September for area veterans with information on community services, employment and support. Held during the day on Friday at the Public Market in Rochester. Help needed: serving lunch to veterans, staffing BSM table and handing out hygiene supplies, set-up/clean-up. Contact Amy VanDerwerken at [president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) to volunteer.

