



OUR NEWS

FEEDING OUR VETERANS: Helping our community's modern-day samurai



United States veterans invoke images of honor, duty, and sacrifice. The mind wanders to fourth of July barbecues, parades, and war movies. But all too often our veterans return home to face a battlefield of hunger. The Department of Agriculture shows that 7.5% of veterans, about 1.5 million, are hungry or food insecure.

This year, Grandmaster Clifford C. Crandall, Jr., the head and founder of the American Martial Arts Institute, organized a community food drive to support Feed Our Vets in Utica, New York. The Feed Our Vets Food Pantry, located at 502 Broad Street, assists over 400 local families each month.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5Phna8EXFw>

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE COLUMN IN THE ROME DAILY SENTINEL!](#)

As a traditional martial art school, we believe that we have a responsibility to make a positive difference in our community, nation, and the world. This concept has been part of Grandmaster Crandall's philosophy and one of his school's values since its inception. Much of this is from his years of training in traditional sword and the philosophy of Bushido (the way of the samurai).



This year Grandmaster Crandall decided to help the samurai of our culture, our veterans. These individuals have fought for the freedoms that we enjoy. Among these liberties, we are fortunate to be able to teach our school's martial arts styles openly in this country.



With this direction in mind, he contacted Michelle Synek of the “Feed our Vets” grocery store to offer our support. This event was large and unique enough that local news agencies featured it, and Grandmaster Crandall appeared on the Bill Keelher Show, WKTV, and Genesee Joe to encourage community members and businesses to get involved. In addition, the Rome Sentinel featured the Food Drive in a multiple page column.

We decorated a large pumpkin box in red, white, and blue for incoming donations to look appealing and bright. Donations were not restricted to just healthy foods. These are families with husbands, wives, and children who wish to have the same food we all eat. This meant cookies, chips, candy, cereals, as well as soups, pastas, peanut butter, and jelly, and more! The donations started pouring in with students and families bringing bags, boxes, and individual items every class.



Grandmaster Crandall established a team of instructors to count every item and log it into a binder which was submitted to “Feed Our Vets” as an inventory of what was donated. We also had two large freezers at the school and accepted frozen food items including turkeys, Cornish game hens, pies, and more. Posters were created, flyers went out, and local businesses shared in the excitement.

Every student, community member, instructor, and small business that supported the food drive was also given a certificate of recognition signed by Grandmaster Crandall.



Just a few of the dozens of students who participated in the food drive, seen here with their certificates of recognition after class.

The food drive began in October, and when it ended on November 22, 2025, over 2,040 food items, weighing 2260 pounds, were donated for the Feed Our Vets food drive. In addition, \$2,200 in gift cards for to Hannaford and Market 32 were donated. These gift cards allowed the Feed Our Vets food pantry to spend on food that was perishable or that people seldom think to purchase.



On November 22, Michelle and Rich Synek from Feed Our Vets brought their large food truck to the American Martial Arts Institute and several instructors assisting in filling the truck with the donations.

Each year we look for new and different ways to positively impact our community. We are proud that this year our students and our local community came together to support this effort and to make a difference in the lives of so many local veterans.







ABOUT OUR ARCHIVES

The American Martial Arts Institute maintains a library at its main office with records of rank promotions, events, publications, media coverage, photographs, and videos. These are in the form of photo albums, copies of our publications, preserved news articles, and digital files such as videos and photographs from events in our history. In 1998, the American Martial Arts Institute launched its first website. Since then, the website has undergone many updates to keep up with changing technology. Many of our school's events and history are recorded on this website; however, not all testing results are maintained online (although testing records are maintained at our school). Events prior to 1998, are kept at our school library. This webpage documents some of our school's history.

For more information visit AMAI-EagleStyle.com.

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