

View in Web Browser

December 12, 2024



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

## Commissioner's Corner



Honor Guard Soldiers with the New Jersey Army National Guard fold an American flag during the ceremony for U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. William

Scott at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, NJ, December 9, 2024.

## Military Honors

One of the privileges that comes with serving in New Jersey's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is the opportunity to help our state and nation render the appropriate honors, the formal ceremonies and dignified burials, of our nation's heroes.

We are truly blessed to be able to help families lay their Veterans and cherished loved ones to rest at our Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, New Jersey, and a number of other cemeteries and grounds throughout the state.

This past Monday, we had the opportunity to render a three-volley salute, play Taps, and present the family of U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. William Scott with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart Medal, American Campaign Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, and his World War II navigator wings.

At the time of his death, Scott had served six months and six days of active service. He was 21 years old. On August 1, 1943, the Clifton, New Jersey resident was serving as a navigator on a B-24 Liberator bomber. Scott was assigned to the 68th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 44th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 8th Air Force in the summer of 1943. I encourage you to read more of his story in this newsletter or in our [news feature](#).

I want to take this moment to thank our Veterans Services and Cemetery staff for everything they do, big and small, to provide our heroes and their family members with dignified and compassionate care, whether their initial loss was quite recent or decades ago -

and now finally being able to properly receive their loved ones' remains.

I also want to thank the countless volunteers who participate in these honors and help make the ceremonies so meaningful. Veterans Service Organizations, honor guards, color guards, Junior Reserve Officer Training School cadets, religious leaders, truly countless others who unite to represent our nation's gratitude.

However, you do not have to be mourning a specific loved one to help. This Saturday, December 14, 2024, thousands of New Jerseyans will participate in Wreaths Across America ceremonies and events in which wreaths are placed on the graves of Veterans in towns all across our state, including our [Doyle Cemetery at noon](#).

The events help us honor our nation's Veterans, their families and their sacrifices, and they help us live with purpose. I hope you will join us.

As always, thank you for staying connected to DMAVA.

We invite you to share ideas, events and feedback. Please email our team at [outreach@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:outreach@dmava.nj.gov).

**Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays**  
**Adjutant General & Commissioner**



## Featured Event

THE 63RD ARMY BAND  
PRESENTS OUR



# HOLIDAY CONCERT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH  
11:00 AM AND 2:00 PM  
BRIDGEWATER COMMONS MALL  
NEAR "POTTERY BARN"

400 COMMONS WAY  
BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807

FREE ADMISSION

Events

**DMAVA Calendar**

DMAVA is sponsoring or will participate in the events below. A DMAVA Veterans Service Officer will be present at many of these events. Please check details to confirm.

- December 13 | Bordentown  
[NJNG Child & Youth Winter Wonderland](#)
- December 14 | Wrightstown  
[Wreaths Across America](#)
- December 14 | Bridgewater  
[63rd Army Band Holiday Concert](#)
- December 16 | Lawrenceville  
[NJYCA Class 58 Graduation \(Invitation Only\)](#)

## Community Calendar

We add new events to our calendar on a daily basis so please bookmark and check back often.

[View Full Calendar](#)

## Spotlight



## **Remains of World War II Airman returned home**

Honor Guard Soldiers with the New Jersey Army National Guard carry the coffin containing the remains of U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. William Scott at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, NJ, on December 9, 2024.

Scott, a navigator on a B-24 Liberator bomber, was killed when his aircraft was shot down during Operation Tidal Wave over Ploiești, Romania, August 1, 1943.

In 2017, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency began exhuming unknowns believed to be associated with unaccounted-for Airmen from Operation Tidal Wave. On November 28, 2022, the DPAA announced Scott's remains had been identified.

[View Images](#) | [DMAVA News Feature](#)

# NJ National Guard



## 44th IBCT Returns Home

Soldiers with the [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#), New Jersey Army National Guard, arrived home in time for the holidays through Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ.

New Jersey National Guard leadership, family and friends greeted the troops. They were among the first few waves to return home of the 1,500 44th IBCT Soldiers who deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

This is the largest deployment of New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers since 2008. Welcome home, Jersey Blues!

[View Images](#)

---



## **119th Fighter Squadron Dedicates “Jersey Jerk” F-16 to Local Hero**

*SrA Darion Boyd | 177th Fighter Wing | December 8, 2024*

Atlantic City Air National Guard Base, N.J. - A U.S. Air Force F-16C Fighting Falcon fighter jet assigned to the 119th Fighter Squadron, bearing a new “Jersey Jerk” tail flash design, touched down at the 177th Fighter Wing Air National Guard base, Dec. 5, 2024. The aircraft will serve as a dedicated flagship for the 119th FS, leading the charge during major operations.

The aircraft is dedicated to U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Donald Strait, a retired commander of the New Jersey Air National Guard (NJANG), who flew a P-47 Thunderbolt and a P-51 Mustang of the same name, the “Jersey Jerk.”

“The jet honors a legend of the Jersey Guard. I would even say the Air Force as well,” said Lt. Col. Michael Long, 119th Fighter Squadron commander.

Strait was born in East Orange, N.J. in 1918. Throughout his childhood, he had a distinct fascination with aviation. Strait enlisted in 1940 with the 119th Observation Squadron assigned to the NJANG. Over the course of a 36-year-long career, Strait served in England during World War II, achieved the title of a “flying ace,” commanded the NJANG, and became the first NJANG officer to be appointed Major General.

“He is integral to the history of the Jersey Guard and the 119th,” said Long. “So to have this flagship and to bring back the Jersey Jerk is really a tribute to him.”

[Read Full Article](#)



Major Donald J. Strait with P-51D “Jersey Jerk” in Europe, 1945. Image courtesy [Air National Guard](#).

---

## Join Our Team

**100% Free College Tuition**

**Bonuses | GI Bill**

**Student Loan Repayment**



## DMAVA Veterans Services



### **DMAVA conducts 21-county outreach tour**

During the month of November 2024, Vincent Solomeno, Deputy Commissioner and Administrator of Veterans Affairs traveled to each of New Jersey's 21 counties to meet with state and county-

level Veterans Service Officers, local leaders, Veterans, families and supporters of the military community.

Discussion topics spanned healthcare, homelessness, educational benefits and much beyond. New Jersey is investing more, doing more and achieving more on behalf of Veterans than at any time in our history.

Thank you to all who participated in the engagements, those who shared their thoughts and ideas, and for all who continue to support those who serve and have served our great state and nation.

*Click on the image above to view full resolution version.*

---



### **Andre' Daigle, Cumberland VSO**

Andre' Daigle is the DMAVA Veterans Service Officer covering Cumberland County.

To contact Andre' or one of his colleagues around the state, please visit our website at [Veterans Service Offices](#).

---



## **Get Connected to Resources & Services**

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has partnered with Unite Us to connect individuals and families to a wide variety of services and resources.

Unite Us is a coordinated care referral network of health and social service providers. Unite Us can connect our New Jersey military and veteran community to resources to obtain benefits, food assistance, housing, education, transportation, behavioral health services, peer support and more.

[Learn More & Request Assistance](#)

## **Veteran Service Providers**

Do you provide services to Veterans? We would like to get you enrolled in this new online referral network, Unite NJ Veterans. This digital platform connects Veterans to the resources around them quickly. [Learn more and enroll.](#)



### **SMS Alerts - Text "NJVets" to 78015**

Opt-in now to receive SMS Alerts from DMAVA! Text "NJVets" to 78015 or scan the QR code above and send. You will be immediately opted-in to receive alerts and important messages from the Division of Veterans Services.

This service is provided free of charge, however, carrier messaging and data rates may apply. To opt-out at any time, simply reply "Stop".

**THE DMAVA READJUSTMENT  
COUNSELING PROGRAM PROVIDES  
VETERANS WITH:**

**INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING  
GROUP COUNSELING  
FAMILY COUNSELING**

**SCAN THE CODE AND CALL YOUR  
LOCAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER,**

**OR CALL:**

**(888) 865-8387,**

**OR EMAIL:**

**VBB@DMAVA.NJ.GOV**



# SUPPORT IS PEER TO PEER



**Call Us 24/7  
7 days a week**  
(866) 838-7654



**NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline**

**888-865-8387**

**[vbb@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:vbb@dmava.nj.gov)**

Veterans Outreach Schedule

Veterans Service Offices

# DMAVA Departments



## **Retirement Seminar**

On December 5, 2024, the New Jersey National Guard Transition/Retirement Services Office held a retirement seminar at the Joint Military & Family Assistance Center in Bordentown.

New Jersey National Guard Servicemembers, retirees, and spouses can register for an upcoming retirement seminar at [retirement.njarmyguard.com](https://retirement.njarmyguard.com).

# NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.



Now accepting applications  
for Class 59 - January 2025.

**APPLY  
NOW!**


**TUITION  
FREE**



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

 [njyca.org/admissions](https://njyca.org/admissions)

 [rpm@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:rpm@dmava.nj.gov)

 (800) 997-5587 / (732) 974-6516

# ***NJ National Guard Family Programs***

December 2024

Newsletter and More



New Jersey National Guard

**CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM**

# NEWSLETTER



**Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and  
Belonging**

DEIB Newsletter

**State Partners**



## **NJ State Agencies**

- [Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicides among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families](#)
- [The New Jersey's Governor "We Value Our Veterans" Awards](#)
- [Vote For Valor](#)
- [Career Services for Veterans](#)
- [Tax Resources for Military/Veterans](#)
- [Educator Certification for Military Spouses and Veterans](#)
- [Civil Service Preference for Veterans](#)
- [NJ National Guard Hunting / Fishing Licenses](#)
- [NJ Special Hawker and Peddlers License](#)
- [Veterans Designation for Drivers License](#)
- [Military CDL Skills Waiver Program](#)
- [Disabled Veteran / Purple Heart Recipient Placards](#)
- [Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing Licenses](#)
- [Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business](#)
- [Division of Consumer Affairs Military Outreach & Support](#)
- [Professional & Occupational Licenses for Veterans and Spouses](#)

- [Military and Overseas Voting](#)
- [Troops to Teachers](#)
- [Journey Through Jersey](#)

## Federal Partners



### **Amid concerns about blast exposure, VA launches new outreach campaign to enroll Veterans in health care**

*VA News | December 4, 2024*

WASHINGTON - Today, VA is launching a new outreach campaign to encourage all eligible Veterans to enroll in VA health care – including approximately 1 million unenrolled Veterans who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This campaign will include text messages and emails directly to Veterans, public service announcements, paid advertising, and events.

VA is launching this campaign after reports of concerns from Veterans about health issues – including mental health challenges and thoughts of suicide – potentially related to repeated blasts and head trauma (low-level artillery blasts, IEDs, missile launches, heavy fire, and more). Since the first reporting about these

concerns, VA researchers have been urgently studying this matter to learn more about the potential health impacts of blast exposure on Veterans.

[Read Full Release](#)

---



## **Civil War Veteran Recognized as the first Cape May, NJ VA Clinic's Wall of Honor Recipient**

Our Cape May VA Clinic Wall of Honor was posthumously awarded to U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Andrew Tomlin who served during the U.S. Civil War and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic acts during his service.

Pictured from left to right is Representative and Guest Speaker Casey Doss from U.S. Senator Cory Bookers office, Andrew Tomlin's 5th generation of grandchildren Dorothy Tomlin and U.S. Army Veteran Matt Tomlin, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Bill Davenport, Wilmington VA acting director Dr. Matthew Morris and executive assistant to the director and moderator Susana Cebula.

Caption and image courtesy [Wilmington VAMC Flickr](#).

---

**Need a  
FLU Shot?**

**GET THE FLU SHOT TODAY!**  
Enrolled Veterans can get the flu shot at their local VA, or at in-network community partners at no cost.

**IT'S FREE!**

**GET THE SHOT AND  
STOP THE FLU BEFORE  
SPREADING**

**VA** | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## No-Cost Flu Shots

Eligible veterans can get a no-cost flu shot from a nearby VA clinic or within your community from one of nearly 65,000 in-network pharmacies or urgent care locations. Flu vaccines are usually available September through April.

Use the online [VA locator](#) for a location near you.

---

**theSITREP Podcast**  
By: Department of Veterans Affairs  
Podcast



VIETNAM



GULF WAR



POST - 9/11

**WERE YOU EXPOSED TO BURN PITS,  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CHEMICALS,  
AGENT ORANGE, OR OTHER TOXINS  
WHILE SERVING IN THE MILITARY?**



**Apply for VA  
health care today  
at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).**

**VA**

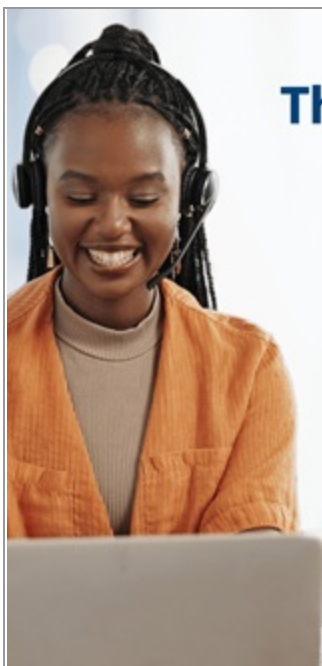


U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



**Have questions?**

Call 1-800-MyVA411 and press 0  
to speak with someone right away.



## **The Women Veterans Call Center is Your Guide to VA**

Live women representatives, many of whom are  
Veterans, are standing by to help.

**Call or text 1-855-VA-WOMEN  
(1-855-829-6636)  
or chat with us online**

Weekdays 8:00 am - 10:00 pm ET  
Saturday 8:00 am - 6:30 pm ET



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# VA



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### Featured Links

- [National Parks Pass](#)
- [VALife Insurance](#)
- [VA Urgent Care Services](#)
- [Accessing Records from the National Archives or NPRC](#)
- [PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#)
- [How to Check Your PACT Act Claim Status](#)
- [Download VA Benefit Letters](#)
- [Podcasts on Veterans' Issues](#)
- [VA Health and Benefits Mobile App](#)
- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
- [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#)
- [Million Veteran Program](#)
- [#VetResources](#)
- [VA Resource Navigator](#)

## Community Spotlight



## **Galloway Township Police Department - Public Safety Cadets - Unit 276**

Last month, [Galloway Township Police Department - Public Safety Cadets - Unit 276](#) and a couple of members with the department visited the [177th Fighter Wing](#) for a base tour.

The group first received a mission briefing and spoke with the supervisor of flying in the 177th Operations Group, before heading to the flight line to view an F-16C Fighting Falcon fighter jet. They also had the opportunity to see 177th Operations Support Squadron's Aircrew Flight Equipment demonstrations, meet the 177th Civil Engineer Squadron's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team and tour the 177th Fire Department.

The goals of the academy focus on teamwork, leadership and problem solving abilities between other academy recruits. This is done with an overall emphasis on the law enforcement profession and the elements within that structure.

Thanks, Galloway Township Police Department and Public Safety Cadets. It was a pleasure to have you visit!



## **NJIT ROTC**

The [108th Wing](#) welcomed cadets from The New Jersey Institute of Technology ROTC Detachment 490 to base on December 7, 2024.

While on base, the cadets received mentorship from 108th Wing members as well as a tour of the KC-46 Pegasus.

---



**Congratulations to the 2025 Gloucester County Veterans Advisory Council Officers**

On Tuesday, December 3, 2024, Commissioner Denice DiCarlo, Liaison to Veterans Affairs, had the honor of swearing in the 2025 Officers of the Gloucester County Veterans Advisory Council.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to serving and supporting our veteran community. Wishing you a successful and impactful year ahead!

Let's celebrate their commitment and continue to honor those who have served.

Pictured Left to right: Jeff Walding Sr. Trustee, Joe Diggs, Trustee, Bill Johnston, Chaplain, Commissioner Denice DiCarlo, Mike Filiunk, 1st Vice Commander, Jaime Santiago, Adjutant, Michael Coventree, Commander.

*Image and caption courtesy [Gloucester County Newsletter](#).*

## In The News



## **Rep. Norcross Presents Five Medals and Two Awards to 99-Year-Old World War II Veteran**

*Press Release | December 11, 2024*

CHERRY HILL, NJ. – Today, Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ), Camden County Commissioner, Melinda Kane, and Haddon Township Mayor, Randall Teague, presented 99-year-old World War II veteran, Gilbert Klein, with five medals and two awards honoring his service. Klein served in the Navy from 1944-1946 and was involved in Operation Juneau and the American occupation of Okinawa, Japan.

During the event, Rep. Norcross awarded Klein the Combat Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic–Pacific Campaign Medal with three Bronze Service Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal, Honorable Discharge Button, and Honorable Service Lapel Pin.

[Full Press Release](#) | [View Images at Camden County Flickr](#)



## **South Jersey town reconstructs monument for all veterans**

*Matteo Iadonisi | 6abc.com | December 3, 2024*

ELMER, New Jersey (WPVI) - After years of wear and tear, a 1950s-era veterans' monument in Elmer, New Jersey, has been replaced with one that will last for generations.

The project was reportedly a decade-in-the-making, and came together as the result of various community members chipping in.

The monument is located at the intersection of Harding Highway (Route 40) and 2nd Street.

[Full Video Story](#)

# In Memoriam



## **Gail Miller**

*June 18, 1942 – November 3, 2024*

It is with a deep sense of sadness that we remember Ms. Gail Miller.

Gail was a long-time DMAVA employee assigned to the Fiscal and Administrative Directorate. More than that, Gail was a friend to so many who were blessed to make her acquaintance over the years.

Her kindness was a beacon of light, and advocate for those she served. Gail will truly be missed.

[Read Obituary](#)

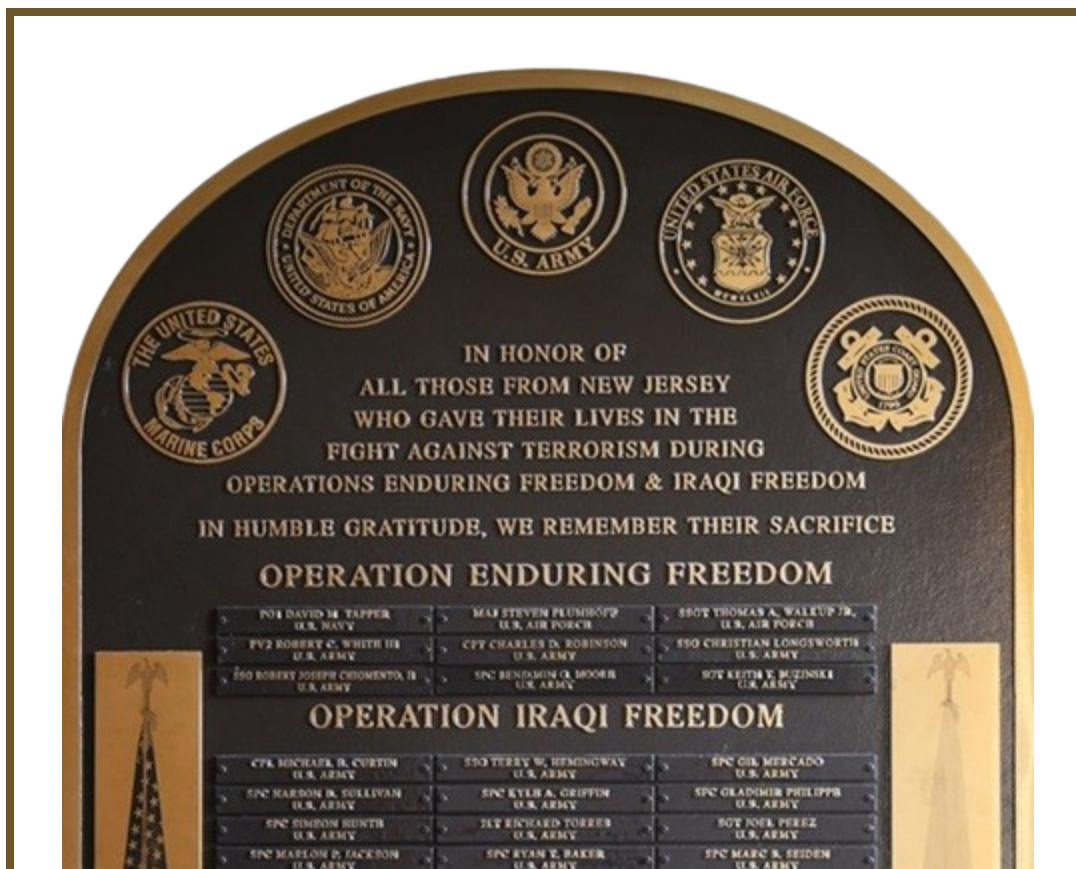
## Did You Know?



### **New Jersey State Archives**

The [New Jersey State Archives](#) has over 11,000 images in their online Military and Wartime collection, including over 1,000 pictures collected by the New Jersey National Guard.

## Never Forget



## New Jersey Fallen Heroes Memorial

In Honor of all those from New Jersey who gave their lives in the fight against terrorism during Operation Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom.

In humble gratitude, we remember their sacrifice.

### Memorial Inscription

*"But on the battlefield their feet stood fast, and in an instant at the height of their fortune, they passed away from the scene, not of their fear, but of their glory."*

~ Pericles

NJ Fallen Heroes Memorial

# History



Season's Greetings from the NJ Air National Guard in 1948.

## **December 7, 1941**

The Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Army sergeant George Schmersahl of Bloomfield was killed in action that day, perhaps the first New Jerseyan to die in World War II.

## **December 8, 1941**

## **December 12, 1704**

On this date the first militia act was signed by the newly joined East and West Jersey Provinces.

## **December 13, 1776**

American General Charles Lee, a former British officer, was captured while dallying at Basking Ridge as

The United States declared war on Japan in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack. Around 560,500 New Jerseyans, including 10,000 women and 360,000 draftees, served in all branches of the armed forces during World War II. A total of 10,372 of them, including ten of the state's seventeen Medal of Honor awardees, made the ultimate sacrifice and were killed in action or died of wounds or other causes.

the British Army crossed New Jersey in pursuit of the retreating Americans.

## **December 13, 1862**

Most of the New Jersey regiments in the Union Army of the Potomac were present at the disastrous Civil War battle of Fredericksburg. Some units suffered heavy losses, including the Twenty-fourth New Jersey regiment, with 136 casualties, and the Twenty-eighth New Jersey regiment, with 193.



## **The First Muster**

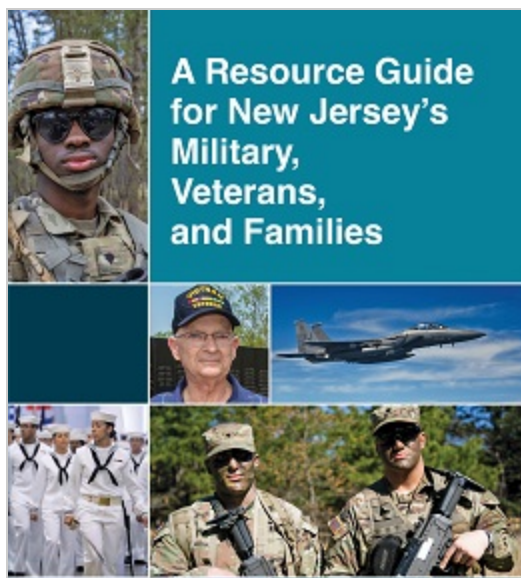
The history of the National Guard began on December 13, 1636, when the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the organization of the Colony's militia companies into three regiments: The North, South and East Regiments.

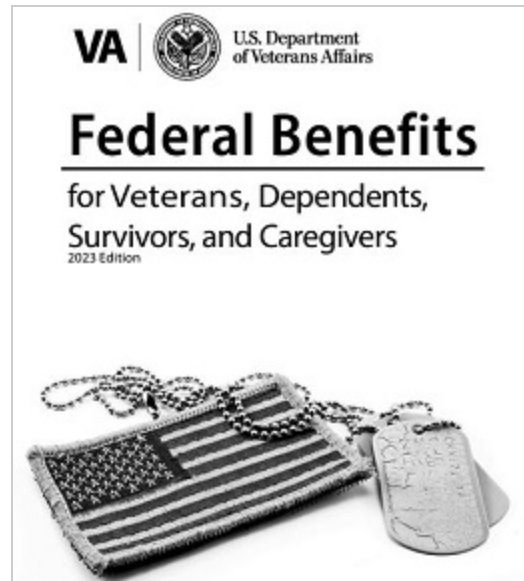
The colonists had adopted the English militia system which

obligated all males, between the ages of 16 and 60, to possess arms and participate in the defense of the community. The early colonial militia drilled once a week and provided guard details each evening to sound the alarm in case of attack. The growing threat of the Pequot Indians to the Massachusetts Bay Colony required that the militia be in a high state of readiness.

*First Muster, a National Guard Heritage Painting by Don Troiani, courtesy the National Guard Bureau.*

## Resources





## DMAVA Careers

### **We Are Hiring!**

At the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs we take our work in support of Veterans, Servicemembers and their families very seriously. Whether supporting our Veterans with nursing care, transitional housing, or assisting them in navigating access to their Veteran benefits, the Department provides valuable services and can offer rewarding career opportunities to members of the public.

We also have opportunities in facilities management and program management. In addition, we have job openings for members of our military to serve in AGR and Federal Technician roles.

Subscribe to [DMAVA Jobs Bulletin](#) to stay updated on job openings.

Vacancies

## Stay Connected



---

We hope you enjoy receiving our newsletter and find it both educational and engaging. If you have questions about our department, our programs or your benefits, please visit our website at [nj.gov/military](http://nj.gov/military) to get contact information.

## Contact DMAVA

---

Please email us at [outreach@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:outreach@dmava.nj.gov) with feedback and comments regarding the newsletter. If you would like to

contribute with an item of interest to our subscribers, please email us your proposal.

Visit the [DMAVA archives](#) to view previous editions of our newsletter.

## Forward to a friend

Subscribe



[nj.gov/military](http://nj.gov/military)

NJ Department of Military & Veterans Affairs  
101 Eggerts Crossing Road  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

[Privacy Notice](#)

Disclaimer: The appearance of any non-DMAVA information or hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement of the products or services on the part of

the New Jersey Department of Military & Veterans Affairs.