

Vetera**N** Journal

"Serving Those Who Served"
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
JUNE 2008



A word from the DCVA

Dear Veterans,

For those of you who may not have already heard, I am pleased to report substantial progress in our efforts to make the New Jersey World War II Memorial in Trenton a reality. Neshaminy Constructors, Inc. made the winning bid and was awarded the contract in March. They have already completed site clearance and exca-



Retired Col. Stephan G. Abel (second from right) chats with (l-r) Arthur Seltzer, Mildred Seltzer and Robert Richter of the Jewish War Veterans following the Vineland Memorial Home volunteer luncheon on May 1. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

vation and begun work on the foundation. At this point, all concerned are confident that the Memorial will be substantially complete for the planned dedication in November. We continue to seek and encourage your generous support so that we can complete the Memorial as designed.

I can also announce progress on the initiative administered by the Yellow Ribbon Commission for Returning Combat Veterans. As charged, the Commission has identified emergent issues facing these veterans and developed networks and programs to help meet their needs. One program, Yellow Ribbon Grants, has been particularly gratifying in allowing the department to provide emergency financial assistance to veterans on a one-on-one basis. The extent of the need has exceeded our expectations, and has in turn been exceeded by the heartfelt gratitude expressed by grant recipients. The operation of this program has paid dividends in several ways; first, by allowing us to respond quickly and in the most direct manner to emergencies which cannot wait for the normal systems and agencies to address; second, the program strengthens our outreach efforts by identifying veterans who were not previously in our system; third, the veteran can be directed to other available services; and fourth, the program identifies needs not previously recognized. We anticipate continuation of Yellow Ribbon funding next year as the appropriation is included in the proposed New Jersey budget for FY 09.

Finally, I wish to express again my sincere appreciation for all the support rendered by New Jersey's Veteran Organizations. Whether it be volunteering at the Veteran Memorial Homes, donations to Vets Haven, the Memorial or the Family Readiness Group or attendance at troop deployment Freedom Salutes and Welcome Home ceremonies, your efforts and contributions are immeasurable, especially to the extent of the pleasure derived by and comfort afforded the grateful recipients. I value our partnership and look forward to serving with you in the future.

Stephen G. Abel

Vetera**N**Journal

Jon S. Corzine

Governor

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth

The Adjutant General

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The **Vetera**N**Journal** is an official publication of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and is intended to serve New Jersey's veterans, their families, friends and concerned individuals and groups. All correspondence should be sent to: Veteran Journal Editor, NJDMAVA/PA, PO Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340.

Cover Photo: 100 years young

Col. (retired) Stephen G. Abel (left), Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, congratulates Frank Cuccia during his 100th birthday celebration at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home on March 20. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

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Message from the Governor

As you read this more than 3,000 New Jersey Citizen-Soldiers have begun a deployment that a year from now will bring them back home as the state's newest veterans. They will join you in the tradition of service to state and nations that makes veterans so important to the American way of life.

This deployment of the New Jersey Army National Guard will have the sons and daughters of New Jersey arriving in Iraq to fight the Global War of Terrorism this fall after mobilization training at Fort Bliss, Texas.

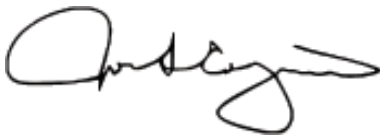
I know all veterans and service organizations across the state will rally to support these troops and their families. These home front heroes, the spouses and children, the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, will all be looking at the community to stand behind them during this yearlong deployment.

This is an historic event in this state's military history, as it will be the largest mobilization of the New Jersey National Guard since World War II.

Speaking of World War II, I am happy to note that our vets from the Greatest Generation will finally have a memorial to call their own this fall. I can look from the windows of the State House and see the progress being made to create the World War II Memorial which we hope will be ready by Veterans Day this year.

Even though the construction has started we need to continue the fund raising efforts for the World War II Memorial. This lasting tribute still needs the financial support of every veteran and citizen of this state.

May all of you have a safe and healthy summer and I look forward to seeing everyone on Veterans Day.



Governor Jon S. Corzine (center) and Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth (left), The Adjutant General of New Jersey, present one of New Jersey's newest veterans Master Sgt. Daniel T. Mitchell Jr. (right), Security Forces, 177th Fighter Wing, the Meritorious Service Medal for his service in Afghanistan. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.

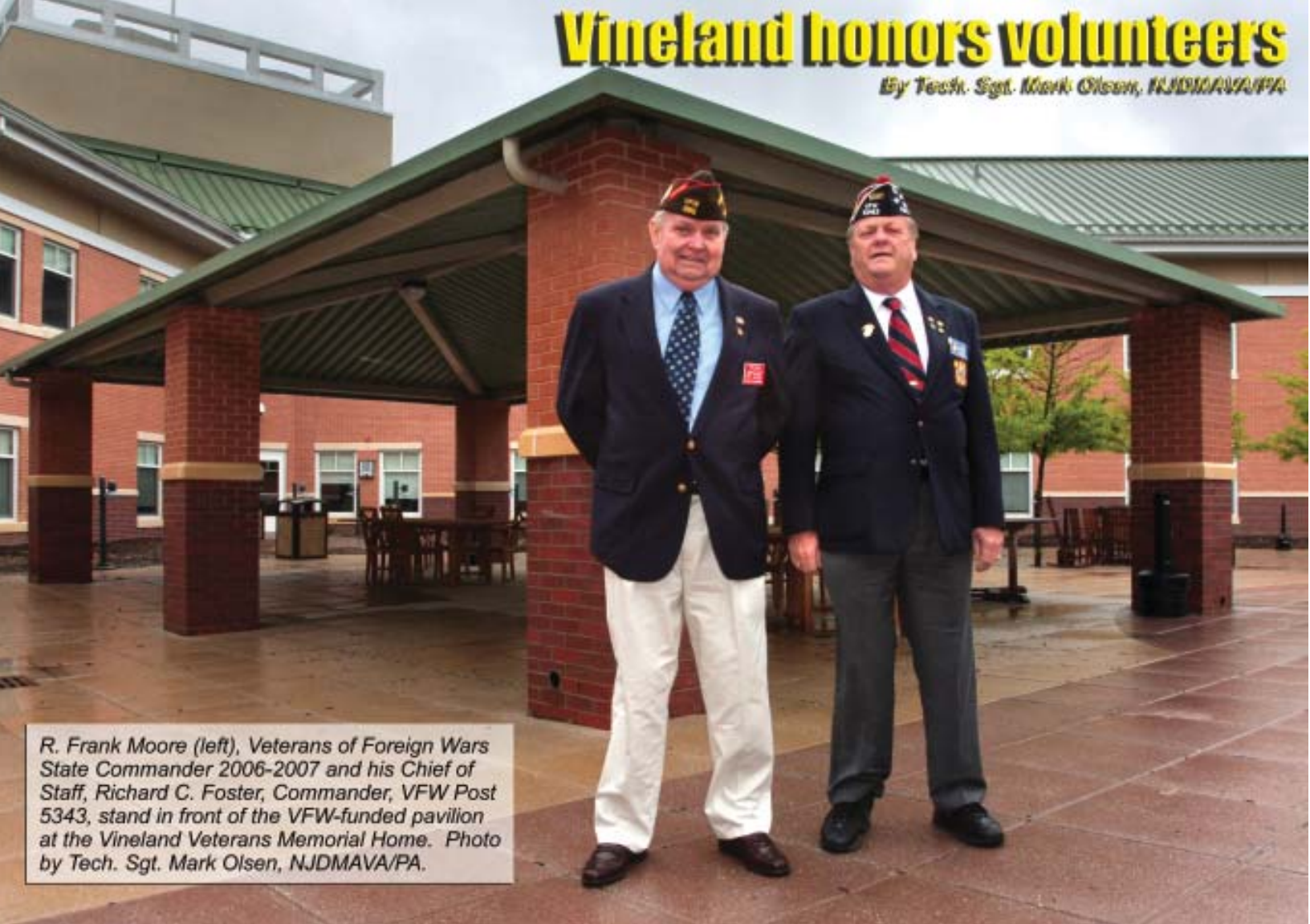
Legion donates \$20K

American Legion Post 390 of Denville members (l-r) Tony Ramirez, Dan Daley, Commander Bob Swenson, Jim Vialard and Richie Fritschie present retired Col. Stephen Abel (third from right) two \$10,000 checks one for the New Jersey World War II Memorial and the other for the New Jersey National Guard Family Readiness Group. Photo courtesy American Legion Post 390.



Vineland honors volunteers

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA



R. Frank Moore (left), Veterans of Foreign Wars State Commander 2006-2007 and his Chief of Staff, Richard C. Foster, Commander, VFW Post 5343, stand in front of the VFW-funded pavilion at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

Who says volunteerism is dead?

During the past year, nearly 13,000 hours of service were donated by individuals, corporations, veterans' organizations and community groups to the residents of the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home. So the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Vineland staff honored those volunteers, as well as the Project of the Year, Volunteers of the Year and Group of the Year at the annual volunteer luncheon on May 1.

Receiving special recognition for the Project of the Year was the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of New Jersey, under the leadership of State Commander R. Frank Moore and his wife, Peggy, past District President #17 VFW Ladies Auxiliary. The VFW raised the funds to build a pavilion, complete with electricity, in the center courtyard of the new Vineland complex.

"Joe (Romano, Vineland Veterans Memorial Home Chief Executive Officer) asked me as my project to build the pavilion," says Moore. "I was proud to be offered the opportunity to be a part of the project."

"When I got the figures, I knew they (the VFW membership) could do it," states Frank. "They have big hearts,"

adds Peggy. The project, which cost approximately \$60,000, was completed in almost 10 months. "Our veterans will be enjoying this long after we're gone," says Moore.

Volunteers of the Year Carol Moore, State Representative, VFW Auxiliary and Bob Moore, State Representative, VFW, assisted with a coffee club, hosted a root beer float and an ice cream sundae event every Friday afternoon while residents participated in bowling. They also sponsored trips to the Cape May Ferry, the Atlantic City Boardwalk, state VFW parties and fishing.

The Vineland Children's Residential Treatment Center was named Group of Year. Under the guidance of teacher Robert Michael Fleckenstein, the group would visit every Wednesday to discuss history and play games with the residents.

Special recognition was given to the Youth Corporation students, the History Group students, the Creative Achievement students and the Pineland students. There were also 10 individual volunteers and three special event groups, comprised of 18 volunteers, who served the residents.

So if anyone says volunteerism is dead, show them the example of the people making a difference in the lives of the veterans living at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home.

Bingo: everyone wins at Paramus

Photos and story by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

The celebration of volunteer accomplishments for the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home (VMH) held at the Holiday Inn in Hasbrouck Heights on April 22 had a unique theme of bingo.

The nearly 200 volunteers eagerly placed candy hearts on their bingo cards as they looked to spell out the word 'heart' on the modified game of chance. This group activity highlighted the fact that 252 Bingo games run by volunteers paid out nearly \$63,000 in cash as prizes to the veterans in the Paramus facility.

Renaming the game 'heart' instead of bingo focused on the dedicated spirit that volunteers bring to the home every day according to Sue Pettigrano, Paramus VMH Activities Director.

"They supply them with the things that money can't buy. They show up every day loaded with compassion, empathy, and giving hearts. They are an essential piece in our accomplishments and the main ingredient in our recipe for success."

The giving goes both ways as the volunteers expressed feelings of satisfaction for the services they donate.

"It is great feeling when you walk away from there," said Irwin Burkett, a 75-year-old Korean War veteran, from Saddlebrook who helps escort on outside trips.



Jack Wall, (left) Fairlawn, Jewish War Veterans (JWV); Marty Rushfield, (center), JWV and Irwin Burkett, (right) Korean War Veterans, Saddlebrook were among the volunteers honored at the luncheon.

Sitting at the same table with Burkett are two members of a local Jewish War Veterans post, Marty Rushfield and Jack Wall, both have been volunteering at the home for five years and enjoy their time spent with their fellow veterans. "I get satisfaction that you are giving something back," said Wall as he spoke about a recent Passover Seder held at the home. "You get tears in your eyes," added Rushfield, who realizes that in future he might be in a position where he would like others to support him.

For more than 22 years Anne Ciarletta, an 83-year-old Cliffside Park resident has been providing that kind of support as a Paramus volunteer. "I can't begin to tell you. I get a lot of joy to be there for our veterans," said Ciarletta, who started volunteering four weeks after the home opened in September 1986.

Working now as a receptionist, she handles the visitors log, gives directions, take messages and makes copies. "Whatever job has to be done, I do it," noted Ciarletta as she spends five days a week at the home volunteering.

"Knowing that I can bring some joy into their lives is the great reward for me."

The Paramus Veterans Home has more than 150 active individual volunteers along with 90 clergy volunteers providing more than 31,000 hours of service. Members of all the Veterans Service Organizations and local community groups including The Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, Lions Clubs, Loyal Order of the Moose, Knights of Columbus, Masons, Rotary Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Women's clubs, Garden Club, churches and schools amounts to the an economic value of \$583,000 in time donated to the home in the past year.



Anne Ciarletta has served as a Paramus volunteer for more than 22 years.

VOLUNTEERS FIND JOY IN HELPING MENLO RESIDENTS

Photos and story by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

Ask any person why they volunteer at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home (VMH) and the word joy comes up in the conversation. The feeling of joy filled the Victorian Manor in Woodbridge on April 30 as many of the nearly 300 volunteers who serve the residents of the home were honored with a luncheon.

"I love it and I enjoy it to see these guys smile when we come in there," said Joe Wojcik, a member of the Polish Legion of American Veterans post in Linden.

The first Friday of the month you will find two dozen Polish Legion of American Veterans post members and ladies auxiliary volunteers hosting bingo. They bring refreshments and food with them, including White Castle hamburgers, which are a favorite with the residents, as upwards of 100 residents come down for bingo.

"My father had Alzheimer's that is why I like to go to that section of the home," said Melvyn Meszaros of South Amboy, who volunteers with the Marine Corps League Detachment that conducts a monthly sing-a-long for an hour.

The past year approximately 150 individual volunteers donated about 3,600 hours and veteran service organization and community groups provided more than 500 volunteers and nearly 7,000 hours of service to the Menlo residents.

"We need to inspire volunteers to mentor new volunteers to keep the torch going," said Christine A. McNulty, CTRS, Supervisor of Recreation, Menlo Park VMH who understands and appreciates the time given to the residents.

Several special projects performed by volunteers during



Ervin Perry, Senior Therapy Program Assistant at Menlo Park VMH encourages a resident to bowl with one of three Wii video games system purchased for the home by the American Legion.

the year created improved recreational opportunities at the home to include the Central District Elks spending \$7,000 for a new bingo machine system, the American Legion sponsored the purchase of three Nintendo Wii systems at a cost of \$7,000; and the Elks and Bowlers to Veterans Link sponsored the Re-Creation show.

Other volunteer projects saw an Eagle Scout build faux brick rolling half walls for chapel services that spill out into town square and Woodbridge High School Art Students painted door murals on special needs secured units during the year.



Left photo: Woodbridge High School art students painted murals on several doors of the special needs secured units at Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home.

Vietnam Vets honored

Photos by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA



The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation held its annual Vietnam Veterans' Remembrance Day ceremony on May 7 at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel. More than 500 people watched the Plainfield High School Air Force Junior ROTC Color Guard (above) present the colors to start the event. Vietnam veterans (right) fill the audience as nearly 160 New Jersey's military veterans were presented with medals by retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, the medals included the N.J. Distinguished Service Medal, N.J. Meritorious Service Medal, N.J. Vietnam Service Medal, N.J. Korean Service Medal and the N.J. POW/MIA Service Medal. To close out the ceremony various veterans' organizations (below) placed wreaths beneath the New Jersey state tree, the Red Oak, in the central courtyard of the memorial.



Yellow Ribbon grant aids OIF veteran

By Gary R. Englert, Director, Division of Veterans Services

On April 26, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs participated in the “Strength and Honor” program, which sought to raise funds to support Cpl. Shane Ugliono – a wounded Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and his family.

The Department presented Ugliono with Yellow Ribbon Committee grants totaling \$5,500 to aid in his recovery. In addition, Ugliono was awarded the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal – New Jersey’s highest military award. The decoration was presented by Sen. John Girgenti, Chairman of the State Senate’s Committee on Law, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs.

The event, jointly sponsored by the Borough of Hawthorne (Passaic County) and REPS Gymnasium, was held at the Hawthorne Boys and Girls Club.

Ugliono was seriously wounded in a firefight in Salahaddin Province (north of Baghdad) on Jan. 8. While participating in an operation, Ugliono’s five-man team came under fire from more than 30 insurgents. Three members of

that team were killed; Ugliono and one other survivor were severely wounded.

Ugliono was hit with at least 21 rounds, with most hitting his Kevlar helmet or body armor. His left arm was almost sheared off by rifle fire and he has already undergone 12 surgeries with more to follow. Ugliono travels to West Point, N.Y., three times a week for therapy sessions. His arm is currently paralyzed and the long term prognosis is unclear. Ugliono’s decorations include the Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart and he has been recommended for a Bronze Star for Valor.

Ugliono is married, with three young children, a mortgage and mounting bills. He is unable to drive himself to medical appointments, resulting in his wife becoming his primary non-military care giver. As such, she is unable to work, which is adding to their financial difficulties.

Ugliono is precisely the type of New Jersey Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom veteran that the Yellow Ribbon Committee grants were designed to assist.

Grants available for combat vets

From the Division of Veterans Services

In 2007, the State of New Jersey established a program to help returning veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). One facet of this program was to provide relief, in the form of grants, for a range of veteran/family emergencies and business “Re-Start” assistance. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is responsible for implementation of the program.

Any OEF or OIF Veteran is eligible to apply for a grant. Family members are eligible if the grant will directly or indirectly aid or provide care for the veteran.

The list of the types of grants available include: temporary subsistence pending disability claim approval, up to \$500 a month for up to six months (\$3,000 maximum); eviction, mortgage/rent arrearage, foreclosure problems; basic subsistence (food and clothing); utility shutoff, heating oil; emergency home repairs (including medically necessary renovations); essential appliance repair/replacement (i.e. furnace, stove, refrigerator, water heater, etc.); vehicle repair/replacement (primary, job or medical necessity); tuition/education assistance; caregiver expenses (lodging, subsistence) to accompany veteran at a distant medical facility; business “Re-Start” - to re-start or rein-

vigorate the veteran's business.

Family grants are limited to a maximum of \$2,500. The business grant is limited to \$5,000. Along with the primary goal of relieving short term financial difficulties, the program has become an effective outreach tool and has served as a vehicle for interagency cooperation and coordination in meeting this veteran populations' needs.

Since February, when the program budget was officially approved, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has received 35 grant applications, processed 32 and approved 29 for more than \$68,000. As word of the program has spread, the volume of requests has steadily increased from three the first week to nine in the last week of April.

All grant requests must be made on a Yellow Ribbon Committee Grant Application, (see pages 9 and 10), include a “need” statement and all requested or appropriate documentation. Additional forms and program information can be obtained from: Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Attention: Carl Lang, P.O. Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340, or by e-mail at carl.lang@njdmava.state.nj.us.

Once the completed application and documentation is submitted, the YRC will review it and provide their decision within five business days.



**NJDMAVA - YELLOW RIBBON COMMITTEE
INDIVIDUAL / BUSINESS GRANT APPLICATION**



1. NAME OF VETERAN	2. BRANCH OF SERVICE	3. E-MAIL								
4. SURROGATE'S NAME <small>(PERSON APPLYING ON VETERAN'S BEHALF)</small>	5. RELATIONSHIP	6. E-MAIL								
7. MAILING ADDRESS		OWN (Check One) RENT								
8. HOME PHONE	9. WORK PHONE	10. CELL PHONE								
11. REASON FOR GRANT REQUEST (Check one, complete statement - Item 15) <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary subsistence pending disability claim approval <input type="checkbox"/> Eviction, mortgage arrearage, foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Basic subsistence (Food & Clothing) <input type="checkbox"/> Utility shutoff, heating oil <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency home repairs/Essential appliance repair or replacement <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle (primary) repair-replacement/Transportation subsidy <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition/Education assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Business "Re-start" assistance (attach Business Plan) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)										
12. DOCUMENTATION (Check all applicable and attach copies to this completed application) <input type="checkbox"/> Deployment orders and /or Discharge Papers (DD-214) <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of latest Form 1040 (Federal Income Tax Return) & Schedule A and C (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Most recent pay stub <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Social Security, Pension, Disability, Unemployment or Public assistance benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Repair estimate (written estimate if over \$500)/Replacement cost <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of past due notices <input type="checkbox"/> VA Claim Number <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Documents validating need and cost)										
13. LIST OTHER AGENCIES OR ORGANIZATIONS (Mil / Vet specific) APPLIED TO FOR ASSISTANCE <table style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"><u>Agency</u></th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"><u>Purpose</u></th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"><u>Amt Requested/Amt Rec'd</u></th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"><u>Date</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<u>Agency</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amt Requested/Amt Rec'd</u>	<u>Date</u>				
<u>Agency</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amt Requested/Amt Rec'd</u>	<u>Date</u>							
14. I, the undersigned, hereby authorize the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Yellow Ribbon Committee on Returning Combat Veterans and/or its representative(s) to request and/or release any information, which in their judgement, is needed to clarify or support information contained in this application (including all attachments) or to secure assistance on my behalf. I also release the NJDMAVA and its representative(s) from any liability which may arise in connection with the verification of this application or the assistance, or lack thereof, which may result. I further certify that all information contained in this application and attachments is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and ability. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Applicants Signature Date </div>										

15. In the space below (use additional sheets if needed) give a detailed explanation of (a) the circumstances that created your current financial need, (b) specifics as to type and amount of assistance requested and (c) actions taken or plans developed to avoid a recurrence of this problem.

Do Not Complete --- Official Use Only

Referring Agency/Unit	Contact/Unit Commander (Print)	Signature
Telephone	E_Mail	Date

Grant Approval Committee Action

Pending Action Reason _____

Grant approved in the amount of _____ Grant not approved



Korean mayor visits Paramus

Sang-Soo Ahn (left), mayor of Incheon, Metropolitan City, poses for a photo with resident Herbert DeVogel and Doris R. Neibart, Chief Executive Officer, Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus on April 15. During a tour of the Veterans Home, Ahn shook hands with the home's Korean War Veterans and expressed his gratitude for all that they had done for his country. Incheon was the site of the Battle of Inchon, one of the Korean War's most decisive battles. Photo by Giulia V. Kirsch, Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus.



Memorial takes shape

Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel (gesturing toward photo panel) shows World War II Commission Member James Manning the mockup of the storyboard walls that will be installed at the New Jersey World War II Memorial in Trenton, which is scheduled to be dedicated on Nov. 11, 2008. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.



Winners honored

The winners of the New Jersey Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Voice of Democracy 2007-08 Essay Contest were honored at the Department of Military Veterans Affairs on Feb. 28. This year's theme was "My role in honoring America's Veterans." Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel (left), Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, presented award certificates to (left to right) Frances Marie A. Mallari, 1st Place; Christine A. Blanke, 3rd Place and Collin D. Schuck, 2nd Place. Deborah McLendon (right) is the Voice of Democracy Essay Contest Co-Chair. Mallari went on to represent New Jersey at the National VFW competition in Washington, D.C. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.



Special Valentine delivery

South River High School senior Leon Schermerhorn presents nearly 1,100 Valentines to Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home Council President David Dulack. The year before Schermerhorn delivered 850 valentines that were distributed to the residents and continued the project for a second year before heading off to Rutgers. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.

Scholarships available

The New Jersey Community Bankers Education Foundation, Inc. announced the availability of scholarship funds for dependents of members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have either lost their lives or became permanently disabled in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

Scholarship funds will be considered for those applicants that have a high school or equivalency diploma and are in pursuit of higher education, including technical or vocational training, and demonstrate a financial need. The Foundation defines dependency as the service member's spouse, chil-

dren, stepchildren and grandchildren (or step-grandchildren), and any person for whom the Soldier, Airman, Marine or Sailor provided one-half of the support in the prior calendar year.

Either the dependent or the service member must have a connection to New Jersey. To establish this connection, either the applicant's permanent address must be in New Jersey, or the soldier's last permanent residence, or military base, must have been in New Jersey.

Questions can be addressed to James Meredith by telephone (908)272-8500, ext.614), or by e-mail at jmeredith@njleague.com.

VA to reach out to combat veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs will begin contacting nearly 570,000 recent combat veterans May 1 to ensure they know about VA's medical services and other benefits.

A contractor-operated "Combat Veteran Call Center" will telephone two distinct populations of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, officials said. In the first phase, calls will go to an estimated 17,000 veterans who were sick or injured while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. VA will offer to appoint a care manager to work with them if they don't have one already. Care managers ensure veterans receive appropri-

ate care and know about their VA benefits.

For five years after their discharge from the military, these combat veterans have special access to VA health care. The department screens combat veterans for signs of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. VA personnel have been deployed to the military's major medical centers to assist wounded service members and their families during the transition to civilian lives.

The new call center's second phase will target 550,000 Afghanistan and Iraq veterans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted the VA for services.

SGLI and VGLI premiums reduced

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Veterans and military personnel with life insurance policies managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see a reduction in their premiums, thanks to improved investment earnings and a reduction in non-combat claims.

The premium cuts affect military personnel covered by Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and veterans covered by the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

Lower VGLI premiums will allow more veterans to provide this low-cost financial security to their families.

On July 1, 2008, the premiums for basic SGLI will be six and a half cents per month for \$1,000 of coverage, down from seven cents per month for \$1,000. This translates into a seven percent savings.

Servicemembers with the maximum \$400,000 of coverage will see their monthly premium reduced from \$28 to \$26.

Servicemembers are also covered against severe traumatic injury for an additional dollar each month.

The SGLI premium reduction is made possible by lower, non-combat-related claims and increases in investment earnings. VA officials believe this premium reduction will help maintain the nearly universal participation in the program.

VGLI provides renewable term policies for people after their discharges from the military. Veterans pay premiums according to their age for this coverage.

On July 1, VGLI premium rates will be reduced for veterans aged 30 to 64, who make up 85 percent of those insured under the program.

To obtain more information about the SGLI and VGLI premium reductions or to view a table with the new VGLI rates, go to www.insurance.va.gov, or call the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance at 1-800-419-1473.

VSO Success Stories

From the office of Christopher Wambach, Atlantic City VSO

On April 26, I, along with representatives from the VA Center, Ventnor; Atlantic County VSO; ESGR personnel; and, various service organizations were invited to the Enlisted Call at the New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing. George Gumpfer, Director of the Vet Center, spoke about the counseling available to combat theater vets and their families.

This was a timely subject given the recent directive on security clearances and mental health. I teamed up with Bob Frolow, Atlantic County VSO and spoke to the Airmen about the work we do as Veteran Service Officers. We emphasized the importance of counseling for Iraq/Afghan veterans.

At the end of the seminar, many Airmen approached us with specific questions on disability claims, VA health care, home loans, and education issues from GI Bill eligibility to financial aid. Earlier in the day, after a tour of the base with Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike

Francis, I spoke to senior enlisted personnel and potential retirees and made appointments for filing claims at DMAVA's Atlantic City service office. Being proactive resulted in success and it was great to reach out and bring our benefit message to the local National Guard contingent.

From the office of Bill McDonnell, Camden/Gloucester Counties VSO

I have a great story. I met two retired priests who are World War II veterans. Of course, I assumed that they were chaplains. It turns out that Rev. Robert J. Brandenberger, CM, was a Marine Officer in World War II, who served from March 1943 until July 1946 at the rank of first lieutenant.

He went into the Marines after graduating from Niagara College (now Niagara University). He was so glad that he survived the war that he became a priest. He never received his discharge in 1946 so I requested his discharge from St. Louis and presented it to him on a Sunday in April. I enrolled

this 88 year old priest at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center geriatric center. The doctor promised to refer him to the audiology clinic so that he can get brand new \$6,000 hearing aids at no cost to the veteran. I presented him with his discharge document after 62 years. He served in the priesthood for 30 years in Panama where, of course, he learned to speak Spanish fluently. Father Brandenberger is a Connecticut native.

The other priest is 88 year old Rev. Charles M. Shanley, CM. Father Shanley served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. I also enrolled Father Shanley in the VA geriatric clinic at Philadelphia. He will also receive hearing aids from VA.

The amazing thing about Father Shanley is that he was rated as disabled by VA in 1946 and never knew it. He was receiving a check since 1946 and could not figure out what it was for. The VA told us that they would re-evaluate Father Shanley in order to increase his disability payment. Father Shanley is a native of New York City.

2008 NJDMAVA VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE

June 5-6 "Elks" Convention

June 11-13 "American Legion" Convention

June 18-20 "VFW" Convention

Wildwood Convention Center

July 8-10 Cherry Hill Mall

July 18* Wildwood Convention Center

In conjunction with the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall

August 5*-7 Willowbrook Mall

Bridgewater Commons Mall – Sept. 2*-4

Menlo Park Mall – Oct. 14*-16

Kiosk hours 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

** Asterisk indicates medal presentation at 10:30 a.m.*





Tent pavilion dedicated at Vineland

Amy Kaplan (left), daughter of Maj. Bert Mann, prepares to introduce Commander Bernard Friedenberg, Garr-Greenstein Post #39 of the Jewish War Veterans, during a dedication ceremony at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home on May 4. The Post donated a tent pavilion, which will be used as an outdoor shelter area for the residents, is dedicated in the memory of Mann, a World War II combat veteran who flew 52 missions over Germany with the Army Air Forces. Mann received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Corps Medal and five Purple Hearts during his service. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerome Grant, 444MPAD.



Dig in Scouts

Boy Scout Joe Blake (center), Boy Scouts of America Troop 96 of Barrington/Haddon Heights with the assistance of his fellow Scouts, surveys the location of various plants during the dedication ceremony of two mobile gardens at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home on May 10. The mobile gardens will allow Vineland residents who are wheelchair-bound to be able to continue working a garden setting. With the completion of this project, Blake will now earn his Eagle Scout Badge. The project was partly funded by the membership of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1958. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerome Grant, 444MPAD.



Phone cards donated

The Women's Club of Manasquan raised \$1,400 to purchase phone cards for New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers who will be mobilized to support the Global War on Terrorism this year. Presenting the 300 minute phones cards are Jane Greenwald, past president; Jane Bessemer, project chairwomen; both to the left of retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, who accepted the donation and Barbara Molteni, President of the Women's Club of Manasquan. The ceremony was held at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt on Jan. 3. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



Honor Guard Service to be recognized

The Honor Guard detail at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery last year performed more than 1,900 funeral honors. Since 2004, the New Jersey National Guard has performed more than 5,700 funeral honors in cemeteries throughout the state. For their service, an Honor Guard Ribbon has been designed, approved and passed out of committee for a vote by the full legislature.

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