

# *Vetera**N** Journal*

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED  
DECEMBER 2009



# A WORD FROM THE DCVA

**Dear Veterans,**

The past year has been an eventful one for the Department and the state veterans' community, and there's more excitement to come in the New Year.

On Veterans Day we dedicated the new columbarium section at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery. After more than a year of planning and months of hard work, the 3,161 space niche columbarium will greatly enhance the appearance and function of the nation's busiest – and some might add most beautiful – state veterans cemetery in the country.

Meanwhile, the 300 residents of the Veterans Memorial Home in Paramus will soon get more space to meet and socialize with the creation of a long awaited multi-purpose room. The Veterans Administration has given conditional approval for the \$1.5 million construction project and I expect the work to be put out for bid shortly.

This past summer and fall the nearly 2,900 Soldiers of the New Jersey Army Guard's 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were the focus of one of the most comprehensive efforts ever undertaken to support troops as they make the transition from warrior to parent, spouse, student, employee and member of their community.

From the moment these Citizen-Soldiers stepped off the plane, they were enveloped in a \$3 million reintegration program to help them reconnect with their families, return to their civilian jobs, address any financial concerns, educate them about their veterans' benefits, and ensure that their physical, mental and spiritual needs are being met.

The mental health of these returning Soldiers is paramount. In the first three months after their return, they will be screened no less than three times for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries and any other mental health or emotional issues.

This comprehensive program would not have been possible without the dedicated assistance DMAVA received from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, VA's East Orange Medical Center and veteran organizations across the state. Our program has received national recognition and is offered as a model for other states to emulate.

The challenge of homelessness received a bit of good news recently as our Veterans Haven transitional housing program for homeless veterans will finally see a planned expansion. Bids have been opened for construction. That will increase the number of beds at the facility to 96.

And don't forget that you can now support Veterans Haven when filing your 2009 New Jersey state income tax return by dedicating a portion of your refund to support the efforts to reclaim homeless veterans as productive members of society.

May everyone have a safe and happy holiday season.

*Stephen P. Doyle*



*Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, left, holds up a photo of Carmine Cannizzaro when he served in the infantry during World War II. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.*

*Vetera***N**Journal

**Jon S. Corzine**

Governor

**Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth**

The Adjutant General

**Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, USA**

Deputy Commissioner for

Veterans Affairs

**Maj. Yvonne Mays**

State Public Affairs Officer

**Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen**

Editor

**Kryn P. Westhoven**

Staff Writer/Photographer

**Tech. Sgt. Barbara Harbison**

Staff Writer/Photographer

**Sgt. Wayne Woolley**

Staff Writer/Photographer

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: Taps

**Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick A. Looney plays taps during the Veterans Day ceremony at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.**

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# DOYLE ADDITION DEDICATED

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. MARK OLSEN, NJDMAVA/PA

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, left to right, The Adjutant General of New Jersey; Frank K. Salvas Sr., Director State Cemetery Grants Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and retired Col. Stephen G. Abel Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs unveil the plaque dedicating the new 3,200 niche Columbarium and public assembly area at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Cemetery on Veterans Day Nov. 11. Funding for the \$2.6 million construction project was provided through the Veterans' Administration – Grants for State Cemeteries Program. The public assembly area includes an outdoor amphitheater with a backdrop constructed of Langhorne stone, bearing the seals of the five Armed Services. The area will serve as the venue for future public gatherings at the cemetery such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day. The Columbarium, located in section P will mirror the Columbariums in



sections F and G previously opened in 2004. Also during the ceremony, a Flag Retirement Service was held, where the ashes of 2,147 flags were entombed.



# Blue Star dedicated at Vineland

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Harbison, NJDMAVA/PA

Hundreds of markers, thousands of miles of highway, honoring millions of service men and women – all started with a small program, the Blue Star Drive, here in New Jersey 65 years ago.

On Nov. 6, New Jersey had its newest Blue Star Memorial Highway marker dedicated at the Vineland Veterans Home; the occasion also marked the 65th anniversary of the Blue Star Drive program.

The Garden Club of New Jersey and the State Highway Commission (pre-cursor to the Dept. of Transportation) had an “inspired idea,” in 1944 according to then-Governor Walter E. Edge. They had the foresight to start a living memorial for the veterans of World War II. The program was to beautify five miles of Route 29 (now Route 22) between Mountainside and North Plainfield. Not only would no billboards be permitted on that stretch of highway; the club raised money to plant flowering dogwoods along the road.

The road would be named the Blue Star Drive after the flags that hung in the windows of families who had members serving on active duty; a tradition that continues to the present day.

Vineland Veterans Home auditorium was the scene of the dedication of the newest New Jersey marker. With residents, staff and many guests in the audience, the Vineland Facility Choir, Delsea Regional High School Junior ROTC, local legislators and the N.J. Blue Star Memorial Highway Council dedicated the marker and celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Blue Star program.

Next, everyone went outside for the unveiling of the marker. Vineland Home residents Walter Wengel and



*Vineland Veterans Home resident Walter Wengel, left, smiles as he assists Bea Allen, New Jersey Blue Star Highway Committee chairperson, unveil the newest Blue Star Memorial on the Vineland Home grounds on Dec. 5. The dedication was held during a ceremony that also celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Blue Star Memorial Highway.*

Charlie Kinsky helped pull the cloth down to reveal the new marker that overlooks the stone planters with their colorful plantings that stand guard over the circular paved area in the center. In the grassy area around the site are numerous young trees waiting to grow and shade the memorial and its guests.

Joe Romano, CEO of Vineland Home, was very enthusiastic about the newest “resident” of the home. He said that the residents had a great time watching the progress of its building. “It will be a great place for residents and their families to come and sit and relax,” he added.



## Legion donates gazebo

*The center courtyard of the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home has a new addition of an aluminum and glass gazebo donated by the American Legion. Former commander Frank Calandrillo, center, gets ready to cut the ribbon on the gazebo that was part of his state commander's projects for 2007-2008. Helping with the fund raising for the projects were the Sons of the American Legion represented by Frank Jiosi, Jr., left, Detachment commander during Calandrillo's term and Dolores Gonzalez, right, president of the New Jersey American Legion Women's Auxiliary 2007-2008. The gazebo was part of \$85,000 in projects that included a greenhouse at the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home, a dozen low beds for Paramus Veterans Memorial Home and improvements to the courtyard at the Lyons Veterans Administration hospital. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.*

# Giving the Home a touch of home

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

We all dream of someone coming up and saying “You have carte-blanc to fill your home with whatever you need; new furniture, new kitchen appliances; whatever your heart desires.”

Reality is this never happens.

Or so we thought...

Flashback to two months ago, Susan Friedenberg contacted Ron "Fuzzy" Freswick, Aviation Director for the Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Flight Department requesting donations for the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home.

Susan, who is the daughter of World War II veteran Bernie Friedenberg, and has been actively soliciting support for the Home from the corporate flight community.

Freswick, an Air Force Vietnam veteran, contacted the Williams-Sonoma leadership, which resulted in a visit to the Vineland Home by Mark Hayward, who is the Assistant General Operations Manager at Williams-Sonoma, Inc., for the Greater New York City Area.

Hayward was impressed by the home's operation and on Nov. 10, Williams-Sonoma donated 60 pieces of outdoor furniture including chairs, tables with umbrellas, chaise lounges, picnic table sets and hardwood coolers.

"I was just floored," said Lisa Williams, Director of Ac-



Ron "Fuzzy" Freswick, Aviation Director for the Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Flight Department, poses with one of the chaise lounges donated by Williams-Sonoma to the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home.

tivities at Vineland. "It will definitely make the difference in the quality of life for veterans here."

Some corporations and groups would have been satisfied with that single donation. But there was more to come. Next spring, the home will receive another furniture donation.

"They've adopted us," said Williams. "They want the residents to have a homelike atmosphere."

Williams-Sonoma still wasn't done.

Company officials told Williams to go to their website and set up an order of kitchen cooking supplies and appliances for the Home's cooking program. The program was set up several years ago so the residents could get together to cook for each other and other residents.

There was no dollar limit on what she could order – talk about a dream come true.

So she ordered everything from waffle irons, portable griddles, mixing bowl sets, dinnerware and flatware sets to stand mixers and juicers.

"They have given our residents meaningful areas to be with their families and friends," said Williams.

This order is slated to arrive sometime in December – happy holidays for the residents.

So yes, some dreams do come true.



Susan Friedenberg, left, with Vineland resident Rick Toler, center, and Mark Hayward, right, Assistant General Operations Manager, Williams-Sonoma, Inc. for the Greater New York City Area, relax at a Williams-Sonoma table.



# WOMEN VETS GET BUSINESS CREDIT

Program features business training and low interest loans

**TRENTON - Governor Jon S. Corzine lauded the announcement by Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Acting Commissioner Charles A. Richman of DCA's new collaborative initiative with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' New Jersey Commission on the Status of Women Veterans that will provide assistance to New Jersey's women veterans.**

The partnership will afford women veterans the opportunity to receive business training and apply for a loan of up to \$5,000 through DCA's New Jersey Women's Micro-Business Credit Program. Loans will carry an amended interest rate of a half of a percent versus the current three percent rate.

"I am proud to honor all New Jersey military veterans by focusing on their unique needs and priorities. It is the least we can do for those among us who step up to serve their country," said Governor Corzine. "With the addition of the micro-business initiative for women veterans, we continue to move forward and ensure that New Jersey's servicemen and women receive the kinds of services and programs that will facilitate their needs and the needs of their families, too."

The Program is a collaborative economic development program implemented by DCA's Division on Women (DOW) and New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, a DCA affiliate. The program helps women with minimal business

experience become successful entrepreneurs. Participants learn how to start, market or expand their small business, as well as increase their business skills through training and mentoring opportunities.

"New Jersey's women veterans now have an added incentive for choosing entrepreneurship as an alternate career," said DCA Acting Commissioner Richman. "This unique initiative will provide them with innovative training and loan opportunities for re-entering the marketplace."

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' website, the population of women veterans in New Jersey as of September 2008 was 28,739.

"During these challenging economic times, the micro-business credit program is a critical strategy designed to help women veterans build financial momentum," said DOW Director Janice L. Kovach. "I am pleased that this initiative will provide our military she-ros with the tools and opportunities they may need to learn, grow and expand their financial resources."

For more information on DCA's micro-business initiative, contact NJAWBO, the statewide agency for the New Jersey Women's Micro-Business Credit Program, at 973-507-9700 and/or visit DCA's website at [www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dow/programs/njwmbcp.html](http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dow/programs/njwmbcp.html).

## SECRETARY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF VETERANS APPEALS BOARD

# New Judges Will Speed Veterans' Appeals

**WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the addition of four new Veterans Law Judges to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, which will enable the board to increase the number of cases being decided.**

"Veterans have earned the right to prompt, exhaustive and professional review of their claims for benefits," Secretary Shinseki said. "This expansion of BVA will enable veterans to receive more expeditious decisions on their appeals."

BVA is an appeals body to which veterans, their dependents or their survivors can go when they are not satisfied with decisions about claims for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). BVA reviews decisions on benefit claims made by local VA offices and issues decisions on appeals. The board currently has 60 Veterans Law Judges.

These law judges are attorneys experienced in Veterans law and in reviewing benefit claims. They are the only ones who can issue BVA decisions. Staff attorneys, also trained

in veterans law, review the facts of each appeal and assist the board members.

In fiscal year 2008, the board decided 43,757 appeals and handled 48,804 cases in fiscal year 2009. Most of the cases involve claims for disability compensation and pensions.

"We must foster a responsive approach when we consider veterans," Shinseki said. "Reducing the backlog of benefits decisions and waiting times are essential to providing our Veterans and their families with the service they deserve."

The VA provides a pamphlet entitled, *How Do I Appeal*. The pamphlet explains the steps involved in filing an appeal. For more information about BVA or to download a copy of the pamphlet, visit [www.va.gov/vbs/bva](http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva). Veterans can enlist the free expert assistance of a New Jersey Veteran Service Officer (see page 19 for list) with any questions, claims, or appeals.



# VFW releases Legislative Scorecard

By Al Bucchi, VFW, Department of New Jersey

**TRENTON--With the gold dome of the Statehouse as a backdrop, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of New Jersey, presented its Legislative Scorecard at the World War II Memorial. Overall, the Assembly worked harder on behalf of the more than half million Garden State veterans than the upper house of the Legislature according to the scorecard.**

During the 2008-2009 legislative sessions, the VFW tracked the progress on numerous bills dealing with veterans and military affairs as they were introduced, referred to committee, and sent to the floor of their respective chambers and voted on accordingly.

"Our biggest concern was the amount of Veteran and Military bills that came up for vote in the Assembly as compared to the Senate," said Commander Jack Shiverdaker. "The Assembly moves Veteran Bills at a 2.5 to 1 ratio, which leads us to give an overall score of A for the General Assembly and C- for the State Senate."

Shiverdaker and VFW Legislative Director Al Bucchi indicated that this has been the scenario in the past two legislative sessions. The Assembly works hard to pass important Veteran legislation only to have the bill stall or die in the State Senate.

One bill in particular has caused the VFW and other Veteran Service Organizations much frustration. A high priority of the Veteran Service Organizations is to expand Veteran Status in New Jersey. Currently not all veterans are recognized using the same criteria as the Federal Govern-

ment for such benefits as Civil Service Preference.

In New Jersey a veteran must have served at least 14 days in a combat area, such as Iraq, to be classified as a Veteran, leaving many without State Civil Service Preference.

"We have tried to address this with legislation that would give those who are not recognized as veterans in New Jersey but recognized by the Federal Government 5 points toward a passing grade and a disabled veteran

10 points toward a passing grade," Bucchi said adding that the problem in New Jersey is that the State Constitution does not recognize a disabled veteran the same way the Federal Government does (Veteran Affairs definition).

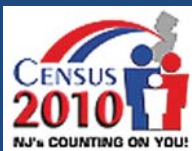
This rule does not allow many disabled vets in New Jersey to qualify for State Civil Service and other benefits. A Concurrent Resolution to change the State Constitution has died twice in the State Senate after passing easily in the Assembly.

Shiverdaker believes the establishment of a stand-alone Military and Veterans Affairs Committee in the Senate much like the Assembly Committee Chaired by Assemblyman Jack Connors, is necessary to advance veterans issues. Currently Veteran Bills in the State Senate are either sent to the Law and Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs Committee and various other committees.

The VFW is urging the President of the State Senate to form a stand-alone Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for the next session in an effort to pass more veteran legislation.



## CENSUS 2010: NJ's COUNTING ON YOU!



2010 is census year. Population totals from this census will determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives.

The totals affect funding in your community; approximately \$300 billion in federal funding supports everything from transportation to health services to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs.

Every residence will receive a short questionnaire

that is simple and fast to complete and return.

Your individual answers are protected by law and are strictly confidential. It is illegal for the Census Bureau, or its employees, to share your personal information with any other government agency—including law enforcement, IRS, Welfare, FBI, Immigration, etc.

For more information, call 212-584-3400 or 215-717-1800 or the New Jersey State Data Center at 609-984-2216.

# Rain doesn't dampen Gold Star Mothers

Story and photo by Spc. Pablo G. Vizcaino, 444MPAD

**The audience huddled together underneath a myriad of umbrellas; the focus of attention, a rectangular-shaped six-foot-tall object covered by a white tarp, standing a few feet from the speaker's podium.**

As the steady rain pelted fabric and surface alike and rivulets of water streamed down, it was hard not to equate the down pour to the untold amount of tears that must have been shed by mothers who've lost a loved one in service to this country.

"We know we cannot mend your broken hearts, but with the dedication of this monument, maybe we can enlighten others," said Frank Romeo, Veterans of Foreign Wars District 6 Commander, addressing the audience gathered together to witness the unveiling of the Gold Star Mother's monument in Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Originally envisioned as a replication of the original bronze statue by sculptor Andrew Chernak, located at Veterans Park in Kent, N.Y., District 6 soon realized that the size and cost to duplicate that statue would be prohibitive.

Undiscouraged, District 6 found the perfect compromise. They would raise around eight thousand dollars to fund the glossy black marble stone with an etching of Chernak's sculpture depicting a grief stricken mother, her tears flowing, bracing herself with one hand on a small stand at her side.

Despite all the challenges, District 6 VFW members feel the effort has been more than worth it. "We felt that



we needed to do more for mothers who lost a child to war," said Carmen Peterson, Veterans of Foreign Wars District 6 Ladies Auxiliary President.

"I'm a mother myself and I could never imagine what they must have felt, so I think it is important to keep supporting them. Hopefully, there will come a time when there won't be any more Gold Star Mothers and that their numbers dwindle," said Peterson.

The road of support doesn't end here. "District 6 has been honoring Gold Star Mothers for the past 58 years," said Bill Griemant, VFW District 6 Past State Commander and Chairman of the dedication. "We will continue to do so with our yearly luncheons for Gold Star Mothers."

## NEW GI BILL CARRIES DIFFERENT ELIGIBILITY, BENEFITS

By Sgt. 1st Class Kryn P. Westhoven, JFHQ-PA

**For our nation's newest veterans the education opportunities are new and expansive, but also confusing; if a service member had already started using other Montgomery GI bill programs before serving in the Global War on Terrorism.**

Recently, Capt. Ben Stoner of the New Jersey Army National Guard's Education Office, called Chapter 1607, the new Post 9-11 program, transformational and discussed how it is the biggest change in the funding of post-secondary education since the original GI was initiated after World War II.

Unlike other GI bill programs, Chapter 1607 provides three separate types of benefit payments to those who have at least 90 days of aggregate active service after Sept. 10, 2001.

The VA will directly pay schools for tuition and fees equal to what each state's most expensive state-run school charges for in-state, undergraduate study.

The students who are attending school more than half-time, seven credits or more, and are physically in a class-

room setting at least for one course per semester are entitled to a monthly basic housing allowance for an E-5 with dependents for the zip code the school is located.

The third benefit is a stipend of up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies. Service members with 36 or more months of active duty will receive 100 percent of the three payments and those with less than three-years will receive a prorated amount. For example the majority of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers would be at the 60 percent level for the 12 plus-month deployment.

Another big change is the ability to transfer this benefit to a spouse or children. The only limitations are a service obligation if the veteran has less than twenty years of service, benefits must be used within 15-years of the last discharge from active duty and you cannot collect more than a total of 48 months of VA education benefits.

For more information visit the VA on the web at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) or call the VA Hotline at 1-888-GI-BILL-1.



# *2010 NJDMAVA VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE*

Photo by Kryn Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

*January 5\*, 6, 7 – Cherry Hill Mall  
February 2\*, 3, 4 – Monmouth Mall  
March 2\*, 3, 4 – Bridgewater Commons Mall  
Kiosk Hours 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
daily*

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



# Veterans rally to help homeless

Story and photos by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

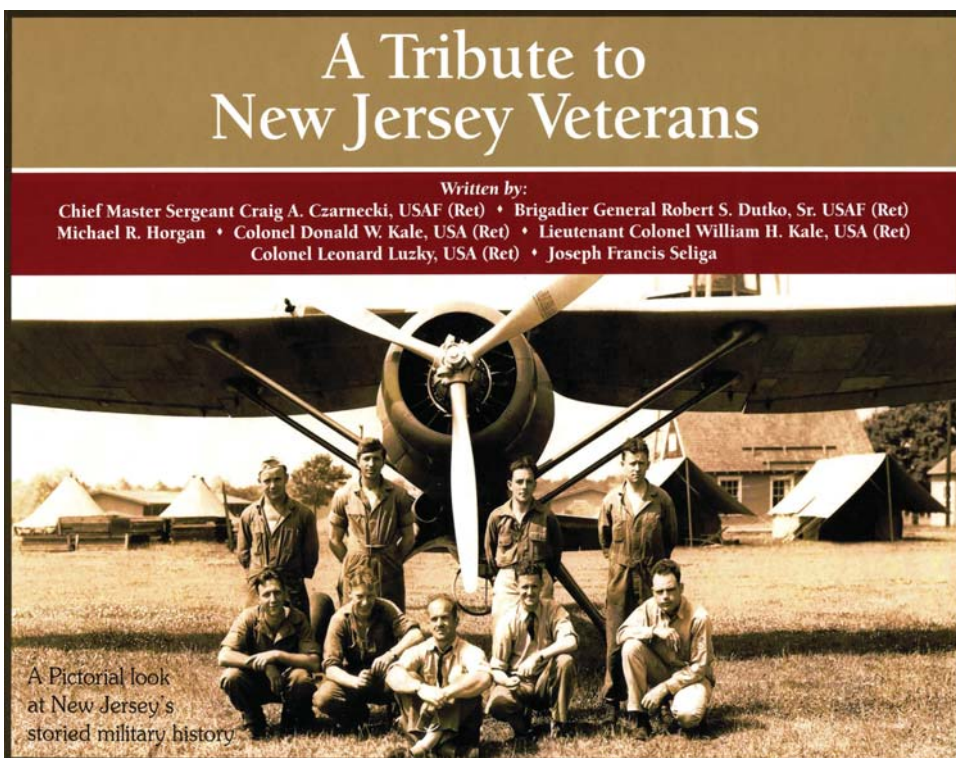


*At the annual South Jersey Stand Down at the Cherry Hill armory, Marine Corps League member Robert Harris, left, assists a pair of less fortunate homeless veterans in bagging up clothes. Among the dozens of volunteers Deborah Solomon, above, of the Marine Corps League Auxiliary takes the blood pressure of a participant on Sept. 25. Stand Down of North Jersey was held in Newark on Oct. 17.*

## BOOK HONORS JERSEY VETERANS

*From the New Jersey Militia Museum*

Recently the New Jersey Militia Museum released a new book "A Tribute to New Jersey Veterans." The book was a collaborative effort by the Star-Ledger and the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey. "This book is an honorable testament to the unselfish service of our veterans," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Dutko. "This book tells their story this book tells your story." Copies of the book are available on-line at: [www.starledger.com/njmilitary](http://www.starledger.com/njmilitary) The museum is located at the National Guard Armory at 151 Eggert Crossing Rd., Lawrenceville, NJ 08648. Call 609-530-6802 for more information, or go to their website at [www.state.nj.us/military/museum](http://www.state.nj.us/military/museum).





# Military Working Dogs

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Donnelly, 444MPAD

**For decades, the fate of military working dogs when they retired was essentially a death sentence.**

Recently at the Vietnam Era Educational Center, in Holmdel, Debbie Kandoll, founder of Military Working Dog Adoptions, discussed how this all changed nine years ago when federal laws allowed for easier public adoption of these canine heroes.

Kandoll's dedication to these four-legged veterans began two years ago when she saved a German Shepherd named Benny, who was only a week from being euthanized.

"In October of 2007, Benny had reached the end of his useful military service because of degenerative joint disease", Kandoll said. After almost 50 phone calls, nearly 30 of them wrong numbers, Benny was heading to his new home with Kandoll.

Kandoll said she needed to apply everything she learned about the military from her husband, a veteran, on her route to adopting Benny.

"I wondered how many more Benny's could be falling threw the cracks and I had to do something about it," Kandoll said. Her belief that future adoptions should be made easier prompted Kandoll to contact Ron Aiello, President of the U.S. War Dogs Association in Burlington.

The pair teamed up to create a Website: [www.military-workingdogadoptions.com](http://www.military-workingdogadoptions.com), which has become a one-stop source to assist in the adoption process. Adoption success stories, web links, phone and numbers and other information makes it as easy as possible for you to be a military working dog's final handler.

Not one of these military heroes ever served for the money, honor, fame or glory. They did it for the love of one person, their handler.

Now these highly trained animals have more chances for a well-deserved retirement.



*Debbie and Mike Kandoll, left, discuss how they adopted Benny, center, with Fern Zappala, Bethesda, Md. Debbie was the guest speaker at the event at the Vietnam Era Educational Center. John Burnam, author of "Dog Tags of Courage" escorted Zappala to her first war dog memorial ceremony.*

## **Vets Haven eligible for tax refund contributions**

*By Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA*

**It will soon be that time of year that most folks dread, or at least cringe at: income tax season.**

If you are one of the taxpayers who will be getting a refund on your 2009 New Jersey state income tax, you have an opportunity to assist homeless veterans of the state.

It is the second year that the Veterans Haven Support Fund is offered as an option for taxpayers to donate all or part of their state income tax refunds. In 2009 nearly \$10,000 was donated to the program.

The Veterans Haven check off will help veterans receive added necessities to help get a job or move out on their own at the end of the two-year transitional housing program. Since 1995, more than 800 veterans have entered the doors of the Winslow Township facility after being evaluated at a VA Medical Center. Eligible veterans must agree to a long term commitment focusing on psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation in a drug and alcohol free environment.



## Lomell receives DSM

Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, left, Deputy Commission for Veterans Affairs presents the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal to Leonard 'Bud' Lomell, a highly decorated World War II veteran who resides in Jackson. The ceremony was held at the American Legion Post 129 in Toms River in April, where Abel encouraged veterans to put in for the New Jersey medals they may deserve. The actions of Lomell are included in Steve Ambrose's book 'D-Day' and earned the 89-year old the Meritorious Service Medal for his combat actions. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



## Installment plan

Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, left, Deputy Commission for Veteran Affairs receives the fourth \$5,000 installment from American Legion Department Commander Rick Zalinkanskas on their pledge of \$25,000 for the New Jersey World War II Memorial. Photo by Ray Zawacki, American Legion, Department of New Jersey.



## 100 years young

Paramus Veterans Memorial Home resident Jacob Shores, left, studies a picture held by retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, during Shores's 100th birthday party on July 24. The picture was taken during World War II, when Mr. Shores was Seaman Shores, a Navy Seabee who served on five construction ships in the Pacific Theater and helped build 441 structures including piers, hospitals and bunkers. Photo by Sgt. Wayne Woolley NJDMAVA/PA.



## Salute to Patriotism Gala

New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation President Jim Cusick, right, and Board Member Lou Vlahakes, left, both Vietnam veterans, present New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial sculptor Thomas Jay Warren, second from left, and Memorial architect Hien Nguyen with an aerial photo of the Memorial during the Foundation's 7th Annual Salute to Patriotism Gala at the Vietnam Era Education Center on Oct. 22. Photo by Ray Martyniuk.





## Fallen Hero Spouse receives scholarship

The New Jersey Bankers Education Foundation awarded a scholarship to Kara Connelly, second from right, whose husband Army Cpl. Brian M. Connelly was killed in Iraq earlier this year. Connelly is majoring in psychology at

Monmouth University and expects to graduate in December 2010. Pictured are, left to right, Foundation Secretary/Treasurer James Meredith, executive vice president/COO, N.J. Bankers; Foundation Chairman Robert Stillwell, president/CEO, Boiling Springs Savings Bank; Paul Gaffney II, president, Monmouth University; Kara Connelly, scholarship recipient; Mary Jo Cittadino-Thomas, Connelly's mother and Foundation Trustee Peter Brown, president/CEO, Manasquan Savings Bank. The Foundation, which provides scholarship funds for dependents of members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have lost their lives or became permanently disabled in the post 9/11 Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, was established in 2005 and funded by members of the New Jersey Bankers Association. Either the dependent or the service member must have a connection to New Jersey. The Foundation can be contacted by mail at: New Jersey Bankers Education Foundation, Inc., 411 North Avenue, Cranford, NJ, 07016; or by calling James Meredith at 908-272-8500, ext. 614.

## New legal assistance project

**EDISON—Legal Services of New Jersey announced a new Veterans Legal Assistance Project to provide legal representation to eligible low-income veterans with VA disability compensation and pension claims, and telephone advice in most other veterans matters.**

According to the Government Accountability Office, it takes an average of 280 days to process a veteran's initial claim and more than 18 months to resolve an appeal.

More than 100,000 claims decided each year are eventually reversed after an initial adverse determination.

It is projected that veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will file more than 600,000 new disability claims over the next five years.

The project will focus its efforts initially on assisting veterans who have filed for benefits and received some form of adverse determination, which statistics reveal can amount to as many as 70 percent of all disability compensation claims.

Initially the project will be staffed by Mary Acevedo, an LSNJ senior attorney. Because of limited funding, full representation will only be provided in disability claims, but telephone advice will be offered for other legal issues commonly faced by veterans.

For more information go to the [www.LSNJLAW.org](http://www.LSNJLAW.org), or call LSNJ's toll-free, statewide legal hotline, 1-888-LSNJ-

LAW (1-888-576-5529).

Those outside New Jersey should call 732-572-9100 and ask to be transferred to the hotline. Services are provided at no charge, but all clients must be financially eligible (below 200 percent of the federal poverty level) and representation is not guaranteed.

## Another VSO Success Story

By Chris Kulkosky, NJDMAVA

**Veterans Service Officer Christopher Wambach, who serves in the Atlantic City Armory Veterans Service Office, recently completed a complex and difficult application for a Vietnam and Gulf War era disabled veteran.**

The veteran suffered from numerous chronic physical disabilities as well as post-traumatic stress disorder incurred on active duty in the Army. Wambach assembled a large volume of medical records and submitted them to the Veterans Administration in support of the claim. The Veterans Administration had undervalued the disabilities of this veteran for many years. Wambach made the case for a higher level of benefits for a veteran.

The VA was convinced, paid a retroactive grant of \$37,284 and has declared the veteran totally disabled. The veteran will receive \$2,823 monthly, a substantial increase. The timely and determined intervention of Chris Wambach on the veteran's behalf made all the difference.

# APACHE BONDS WITH RESIDENTS

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison

Say “Apache” at Vineland Veterans Home and the residents aren’t listening for the “whup, whup” sound or looking out the windows for a helicopter landing nearby.

Instead they will be listening for the “ruff, ruff” bark or watching for a large yellow Lab marching down the home’s hallways.

Apache is the Labrador Retriever who has inhabited Vineland for more than a year, making the residents light up as Lisa Williams, Supervisor of Recreation, takes him on his rounds.

Williams interviewed residents and many mentioned how they were missing their pets. She did research on pets, breeds and thought that a dog seemed to be the best fit with a mostly male population.

“I have worked as director of activities for 20 years around the county,” said Williams, “but this is the first time I have had a dog at the home for the residents. The administration really supported it when I brought up the idea.”

The dog, donated by Pampered Pup Kennel of Millville, was named Apache by the residents after the military helicopter. Volunteers help with the vet bills and at Christmas he even got gifts from the volunteers.

Williams made sure Apache had training. Ted D’Onofrio from Ted’s Pet Country in Vineland was honored during the Vineland Homes April volunteer luncheon for the time and energy he had donated in training Apache.

“Once Apache knew what was expected of him, he did



well in training,” said D’Onofrio, who has been training dogs for 17 years. He is working with Williams preparing Apache for his certification as a Canine Good Citizen, the first step on Apache’s way to becoming a Certified Therapy Dog.

Williams said age and training has brought some maturity to Apache. “We can see him bonding with many of the residents,” she said. “In particular, I am amazed to see him with one of our frail women who is on hospice. It is like he knows that he has to be especially gentle; he just sits and puts his chin on her lap.”

Fay Novack of the Liberty Square Residents Council was happy to see Apache walking alongside Williams recently. He laid his head in her lap as she sat in her wheelchair. She patted him and smiled. “This is perfect,” she said.

## VOLUNTEERS ARE MAGIC IN PARAMUS

Story and photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

**Magicians have many tricks involving money, from pulling coins from behind your ear to changing paper money into a bird.**

The magicians at the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home are the volunteers and they have made more than three-quarter of a million dollars appear in donated time and goods.

This huge amount of help comes from more than 32,000 hours provided by individuals, students and clergy volunteers and cash donations of \$139,715.

“I have witnessed the fact that volunteers can work magic,” said Sue Pettigrano, Director of Volunteer Services, who coordinates 129 individual volunteers and nearly 200 groups and organizations that visit veterans in Paramus. “They are the essential piece in our accomplishments and the main ingredient in our recipe for success.”

The volunteers come from large corporations like Veri-

zon, KPMG and BAE and local churches and schools. The veteran service and military organizations provide dozens of helping hands along with dozens of community groups to include the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, Lions Clubs, Loyal Order of the Moose and Knights of Columbus to name a few.

These organizations are also the ones responsible for major contributions of flat screen television sets, DVD players, videos and large numbered clocks, electric wheelchairs, Nintendo Wii game systems, portable radios, upright electronic piano, gas grills, phone cards, easy listening personal earphones and more than 300 sweat suits.

Volunteers organized 289 bingo games, during which they gave out approximately \$72,250 in prizes to residents.

“You make our home, a true home,” said Doris Neibart, CEO of the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home. “We could not do it without you.”



# Menlo salutes volunteers

Story and photo by Sgt. Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA



**Five years as a Navy corpsman made Joseph Weinberger comfortable in jobs outside his formal training.**

He trained to save combat-wounded Marines in Korea – and did that. But he also ended up running the night shift at a hospital in Japan, counseling troubled service members and even tracking down prostitutes suspected of giving sailors venereal diseases.

“In the Navy, I had a lot of jobs,” said Weinberger, who served from 1951 to 1955. “Doctor, psychiatrist, nurse, food washer, you name it.”

So it should be no surprise that while Weinberger spent his working years as a Johnson & Johnson drug researcher, in retirement, his volunteer work at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home had nothing to do with what he did in the Navy or later to make a living.

On Fridays, Weinberger helps lead Sabbath, as well as the Seder services at Menlo Park. He’s part of a team from Jewish War Veterans Post 133 in New Brunswick that makes the trip every week.

The JWV volunteers were among more than 100 Menlo Park volunteers honored at a luncheon on April 23 celebrating National Volunteer Work.

Stephen G. Abel, a retired Army colonel who serves as New Jersey DMAVA’s Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, told the volunteers that the contributions they make at Menlo Park are simply beyond measure.

“We don’t pay you,” Abel said. “Not because what you do is not valuable. But because what you do is in fact, priceless.”

The residents apparently share the sentiment.

“I like to call our volunteers ‘The Miracle Workers of Menlo Park,’” said David Dulak, the president of the resident association. “You perform miracles every day.”

The list of projects spearheaded by volunteers at Menlo Park is exhaustive. Volunteers provide everything from arts and crafts to horticulture therapy to computer training to creative writing and dance. They organized bingo games and trips out for meals and sporting and entertainment events.

Some volunteers, like Ed Gorman, were coming to help out long before it even moved to its current location in 1999. Gorman made the decision to become a volunteer on June 6, 1944, D-Day, at a point in the battle when it was unclear whether he’d survive.

“I made a pledge that day that if I made it, I would do everything I could for the rest of my life to help my fellow man,” Gorman said. “So here I am.”

The sense of volunteerism rubbed off on his grandson, Ed Gorman Jr. For his Eagle Scout leadership project, the younger Gorman raised \$10,000 to design and build a six-hole putting green at the Menlo Park home. It was dedicated in May.

The Menlo Park volunteers say the knowledge they are appreciated is all the payment they need.

At least that’s how Joseph Weinberger, the Navy corpsman from long ago, feels when he leaves Menlo Park after an afternoon of leading worship.

“They grab my hand when I leave and say ‘God bless you,’” Weinberger said. “They make me realize that I am truly blessed.”



# SEDER HELD AT MENLO

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

**Seder was observed at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home on April 14.**

Each year for more than 15 years, Milton Frant, a member of the Jewish War Veterans Post 133 New Brunswick, has held a Passover Seder for the Jewish residents at Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home. Every month he holds a Sabbath ceremony, as well as an annual Hanukkah party.

"Our Jewish residents really look forward to it," said Joseph Brandspiegel, Menlo chief executive officer.

"Since my wife passed away 18 years ago, I've dedicated my life to volunteer work," said Frant. Frant was an engineer gunner on an Army Air Forces Douglas A-20 Havoc with 50 combat missions in the Pacific during World War II.



*Milton Frant, right, helps resident Evelyn Sterngart, whose husband was killed in action during World War II, recite during the Passover Seder.*



*Resident Mark Smolinsky talks with Ross Abramson. Smolinsky was part of the Manhattan Project team, which developed the atomic bomb.*

Seder is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of Passover and is held in late March or April. The Seder service includes the narrative of the exodus from Egypt, special blessings and rituals, commentaries from the Talmud, and special Passover songs.

This year, Frant was joined by eight members of Post 133 for this particular Seder. Also assisting with the ceremony were assistant scoutmaster Alan Grossman and his son, Adam; Helene Abramson and her son, Ross; and Valentina Gordon.

According to one member of Post 133, "Milton Frant is the heart and soul of the Jewish activities here."

## Mission of Honor rolls into Doyle

Story and photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

**The rumble of motorcycles broke the still of autumn day at Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Cemetery as the unlikely sound and sight of several dozen bikes brought a trio of veterans to their final resting place.**

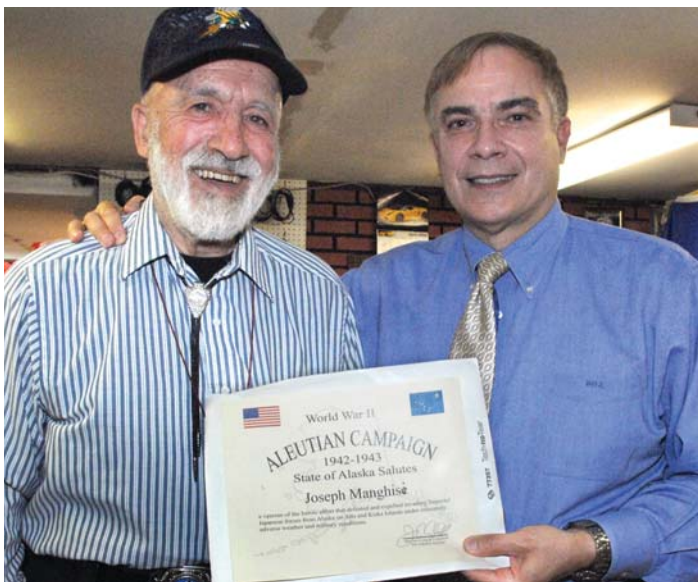
New Jersey's Mission of Honor for Remains of American Veterans provided Air Force Vietnam veteran Michael Sullivan and a pair of World War II Navy vets, Stephen Hedman and Francis Whelan with full military burial. Their cremains were located recently in a Middlesex county funeral home.

The New Jersey Mission of Honor relies on a network of supporters from the Vietnam Veterans of America's State Council and other veteran service organizations who work with local funeral homes to ensure that the cremated remains of any unclaimed veteran will be identified, claimed and interred at the Doyle cemetery. Contributions provide each veteran with an urn bearing their respective military branch of service. Additional information is available online at [www.njsmissionofhonor.org](http://www.njsmissionofhonor.org).

Donations to help the cause may be sent to New Jersey's Mission Of Honor for Remains of American Veterans, P.O. Box 263, Bordentown, NJ 08505.







## Aleutian Campaign Vet

On Tuesday April 28, retired colonel Steve Abel presented an overdue certificate to George Marsin who served in the Navy during the Aleutian Conflict. Aleutian Campaign Vets who served between June 3, 1942 and August 24, 1943 should contact the State of Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs if you have not received your personal certificate. Include your name, service number, unit, location and dates served on your letter and send to the State of Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs PO Box 5800 Ft. Richardson, AK 99505-5800 or call 907-428-6016. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



## Consul participates in ceremony

The Korean Consul General to the United Nations, Kyung-Keun Kim, left, with George Bruzgis, Department of New Jersey Korean War Veterans Association pause in front of the Jersey Korean War Memorial in Atlantic City. Kim was the guest speaker for the event on July 27 that commemorated the 56th Anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice. The event is hosted annually by the New Jersey Korean War Veterans Association in cooperation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The Memorial, which stands on land donated by Atlantic City, was dedicated on Nov. 13, 2000. The Korean Conflict, 1950-1953, claimed more than 900 New Jersey Veterans. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.

## Dedicated Companion

Leaders of the American Legion and other veterans groups gathered on Sept. 12 at Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery for the dedication of "The Companion" statue outside the chapel. "The Companion" started as the State Commanders project by Chuck Robbins, right, American Legion Department of New Jersey commander for 2006-2007. The Sons of the American Legion Detachment commander Michael Arner, left, and American Legion Auxiliary president Shirley Fabian, center, help with the unveiling as those organization assisted with the fund raising for the statue that will honor and memorialize all those from New Jersey who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terrorism. The sculpture was designed by world renowned artist Helene Massey-Hemmans, who wanted to depict the values of "Duty, Honor and Service" in this final tribute to a deceased veteran. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.





# 'Yellow Ribbon' greets 50th in AC

By Sgt. Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA; graphic and photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

After two months of tough training in Texas followed by 10 hard months in Iraq, the New Jersey Army National Soldiers of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Lawrenceville, got a chance to unwind with their families in Atlantic City.

It was the first of three Yellow Ribbon re-integration events to help Citizen-Soldiers make the transition back to civilian life and learn about how their service in the combat zone has made them eligible for enhanced education, health and other benefits.

The Yellow Ribbon program is a year-old initiative sponsored by the Department of Defense and provides for three events within 90 days of the return of Soldiers from a combat deployment. The first event is to provide Soldiers with information on benefits. The second event focuses on their mental health and the final reintegration event is for a comprehensive health screening. The Pentagon provided New Jersey with about \$3 million for the Yellow Ribbon program.

The goal of the first event in Atlantic City was to give the Soldiers and their families the ability to learn about their benefits in an informal setting. Many Soldiers with children brought them along.

Having his 2-year-old daughter Aimee in tow ensured that Spc. David Bennett had few dull moments. The 23-year-old alternated his time listening to briefings and then turning the listening duties over to his wife whenever Aimee got restless and wanted to run in the hallways in the Convention Center.

"Having her here is actually relaxing for me ... it kind of makes it less like a formal military event," said Bennett, who served near Baghdad with the 328th Military Police Company of Cherry Hill.

Bennett, who is attending Rutgers University, said that at one of the briefings, he learned that he may be able to transfer some of his higher education benefits to his wife or daughter under the new enhanced GI Bill.

"Learning something like that makes coming here all the more worthwhile," Bennett said.

In addition to learning about benefits, the Soldiers were able to attend a career exposition that featured nearly 100 em-



Chris Kulkosky, left, Veterans Service Training Officer with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs discusses state and federal benefits with a 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldier. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

ployers and nearly 40 institutions of higher learning. The career exposition continued Monday when it opened to all military veterans.

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Johnson said he considered the banquet an extension of the welcome home that began with a parade in Trenton in June and has continued with events in towns across the state.

"The parade, the picnics, now this all kind of reminds you that people appreciate what we did," Johnson said. "Everybody has been great to us."

## **N.J. YELLOW RIBBON COMBAT VETERAN SUPPORT**

Since its inception in FY 08, this program has allocated almost \$2 million to reach and assist veterans in four principle areas:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>OUTREACH</b>  | \$160,000                              |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION (TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS)</b>        | \$500,000                              |
| <b>PTSD/TBI (AWARENESS, EVALUATION AND COUNSELING)</b> | \$600,000                              |
| <b>FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:</b>                           |  |
| <b>Housing</b>   | \$270,000                              |
| <b>Subsistence</b>                                     | \$155,000                              |
| <b>Utilities</b>                                       | \$45,000                               |
| <b>Family Care</b>                                     | \$55,000                               |
| <b>Transportation (Primary Vehicle)</b>                | \$40,000                               |
| <b>Tuition</b>   | \$45,000                               |
| <b>Business Restart</b>                                | \$40,000                               |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <u>\$650,000</u><br><b>\$1,910,000</b> |



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**NEW LOCATION:**

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1008 Absecon Boulevard  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401-1999  
609-441-3060/3061  
Fax: 609-441-3899

**BERGEN**

Robert Maulano, VSO  
Luz Isip, Sec.  
125 State Street, Suite 109.  
Hackensack 07601-5435  
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VA Regional Office  
20 Washington Place  
Newark, NJ 07102-3230  
973-297-3220  
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678 Montgomery Street  
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PO Box 671  
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Newark, 07102-3174  
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Philadelphia, PA 19144  
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1-888-8NJ-VETS, or go online to:

[www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/index.html)



# The New Jersey World War II Memorial



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