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**December 24, 2025**



**DMAVA**

**Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs**

Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

**Commissioner's Corner**



Brig. Gen. Yvonne L. Mays addresses Soldiers in Iraq.

## Happy Holidays

As we close out the year and enter the holiday season, I want to thank the Soldiers, Airmen, Civilians, and partners of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for your dedication and service.

Last week, State Command Sergeant Major Mark Leonard and I had the opportunity to visit New Jersey National Guard Soldiers of the 42nd Regional Support Group deployed in Iraq. Seeing their professionalism, resilience, and commitment was a powerful reminder that our people remain our greatest strength.

This year has been marked by significant accomplishments across DMAVA, all made possible by your hard work and steady focus on those we serve. From supporting operational missions at home and abroad to expanding and improving services for our Garden State Veterans, these achievements reflect months and years of deliberate effort and teamwork.

As we prepare to welcome the new year, let us also pause to remember those currently deployed, those preparing to deploy, and the families whose sacrifices make our mission possible. Your service, and the support behind it, matter deeply.

On behalf of the DMAVA leadership team, I extend my sincere gratitude and best wishes to you and your families for a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

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 Events

*Free  
Events*



*Trenton's Revolutionary History Comes to Life*

# **PATRIOTS WEEK**

**DECEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> - 31<sup>ST</sup>**



**HISTORIC WALKING TOURS • MUSKET DEMOS  
PUPPET SHOW • FIREWALK • LECTURES & MORE!**



**DOWNTOWN TRENTON**  
**WWW.PATRIOTSWEEK.COM**



# Veteran Claims Clinic

**Monday, January 5, 2026**  
**12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Wilmington VA Medical Center is hosting a Veteran Claims Clinic at their **NEW** Atlantic County VA Clinic location.

Ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m.

**Additional resources available:**

- Enrollment -
- Whole Health -
- Patient Advocates -
- Women's Health -
- Suicide Prevention -
- Homeless Programs -

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**1201 New Road**  
**Suites 120**  
**Linwood NJ, 08221**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Please direct any questions to: [pao.wilmington@va.gov](mailto:pao.wilmington@va.gov)

# 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.

- January 10 | Bordentown  
[Navigating Life After Loss of a Soldier](#)
- January 11 | Bordentown  
[NJNG Youth Camp 2026 Registration & Reunion Day](#)

## Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

## Spotlight



### **Governor-elect Sherrill Announces Cabinet Picks to Lead Departments of Veterans Affairs and Military Affairs Following Department Split in January**

*Office of the Governor-elect | December 22, 2025*

TRENTON - Today, Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill named two public servants to lead the soon to be established Department of Military Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Legislation reorganizing the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) was signed into law in September and takes effect January 9, 2026.

Governor-elect Sherrill confirmed that U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays will continue to serve as The Adjutant General of New Jersey and will be nominated to lead the Department of Military Affairs.

U.S. Army Veteran Vincent Solomeno III, who currently serves as a deputy commissioner and the state's administrator of veterans affairs, will be nominated by Governor-elect Sherrill to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[Read Full New Release](#)

## NJ National Guard



## **NJNG Leadership Visits NJ Guardsmen Deployed in the Middle East**

Brig. Gen. Yvonne Mays, The Adjutant General, and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Leonard, State Command Sergeant Major, pose for a group photo with Soldiers from Task Force Integrator, [42nd Regional Support Group](#), at Baghdad, Iraq on December 16, 2025.

Brig. Gen. Mays paid a visit to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility to meet with New Jersey Guardsmen who are deployed in support of [Operation Inherent Resolve](#).

[View Images](#)

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**State Partnership Program**

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Soldiers with the New Jersey Army National Guard met with the Cypriot National Guard and the New Jersey Forest Fire Service to train together through the [State Partnership Program](#) at Coyle Field Airport in Chatsworth, NJ on November 19, 2025.

The training was to enhance major-incident response, wildfire mitigation, and global crisis-management capabilities.

The State Partnership Program is a Department of State and Department of Defense joint security cooperation program administered by the National Guard Bureau that links a state's National Guard with the armed forces of a partner country in order to build long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with U.S. partners around the world.

[View Images](#)

## **Join Our Team**

**100% Free College Tuition  
Bonuses | GI Bill  
Student Loan Repayment**



## DMAVA Veterans Services



## **Governor-elect Sherrill Visits Paramus**

New Jersey Gov.-elect Mikie Sherrill, Commissioner-Designate of Veterans Affairs Vincent Solomeno, and Brig. Gen. Yvonne L. Mays, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, visited the [New Jersey Veterans Home at Paramus](#) for a holiday celebration with residents and staff on December 22, 2025.

[View Images](#)

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## **Bringing Veterans Home Project**

On December 11, 2026, Commissioner-Designate of Veterans Affairs Vincent Solomeno and the NJ Department of Community Affairs welcomed Community Solutions into the [Bringing Veterans Home Project](#) during the New Jersey Built for Zero Backbone Launch meeting at Newark Alliance in Newark, NJ.

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The meeting went over Community Solutions role in helping to sustain a statewide systems change infrastructure, as well as discussing the Backbone role, strategy, goals, and plans for how we will support the six BVH regions in reaching Functional Zero for Veterans.

[View Images](#)

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## **Wreaths Across America**

Wreaths were placed at [Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#), Wrightstown, NJ on December 13, 2025.

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The ceremony culminated with the presentation of memorial wreaths for each branch of the armed forces by Civil Air Patrol cadets.

[View Images](#)

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## **State Medal Ceremony**

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs held a State Medal Ceremony at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3401 in Morris Plains, NJ on December 17, 2025.

[View Images](#)

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# Unite Veterans

## 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](#)

**BRINGING VETERANS HOME** 

**Veteran Homelessness**

The mission of Bringing Veterans Home (BVH) is to effectively end veteran homelessness in New Jersey by enhancing existing systems, creating rapid access to housing, and ensuring homelessness becomes rare, brief and non-recurring.

BVH creates a clear path to stable housing for veterans experiencing homelessness through a coordinated network of services and support.

[Learn More / Refer a Veteran](#)

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

**INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING  
GROUP COUNSELING  
FAMILY COUNSELING**

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**OR CALL:**

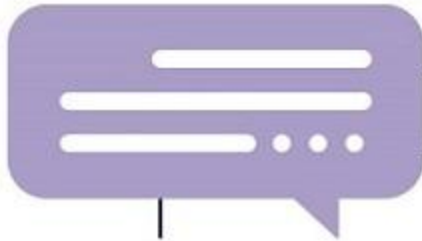
**(888) 865-8387,**

**OR EMAIL:**

**VBB@DMAVA.NJ.GOV**



# SUPPORT IS PEER TO PEER



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7 days a week**  
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**NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline**

**888-865-8387**

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

**Veterans Outreach Schedule**

**Veterans Service Offices**

## **DMAVA Departments**



**NJ Youth ChalleNGe Academy Class 60 Graduation**

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The NJ Youth ChalleNGe Academy graduation ceremony for Class 60 was held in Sea Girt, NJ on December 17, 2025.

The [NJ Youth ChalleNGe Academy](#) is an alternative education program designed to reclaim the lives of at-risk 16 to 18 year old youths and produce graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program was established by Congress in 1993. New Jersey's first ChalleNGe class began in September 1994.

[View Images](#)

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# NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.



TUITION  
FREE

Now accepting applications  
for Class 61 - January 2026!

APPLY  
NOW!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



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



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



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





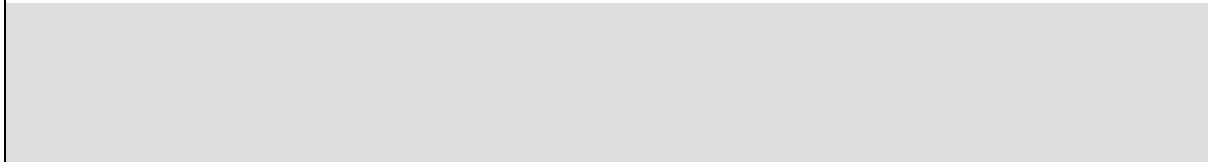
## **NJ MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE**

\* /njarngfac



## **NJNG Child & Youth Program**

\* /njngcyp



**State Partners**



## **Civil War Flag Unveiling**

New Jersey contributed over 80,000 men to the fight and the New Jersey State Museum has over 100 flags carried by New Jersey's troops in the war in its collection.

Five of these historic flags will be unveiled in specially designed exhibit cases at the [New Jersey State Museum](#), located at 205 West State Street in Trenton at 10 AM on December 30, 2025.

[Learn More](#)



## **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](#)
- [Bringing Veterans Home](#)
- [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](#)
- [Veterans & Spouses Entering the Educator Workforce](#)
- [Journey Through Jersey](#)

## Federal Partners



### **Veteran & military year-round discounts**

*VA News | December 16, 2025*

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Researching Veteran discounts often means dodging outdated information, misleading sites or even malware. We've created a reliable list: no fees, and fully vetted. We've got your six.

This list was created in 2021, but verified as of Dec. 12, 2025. Updates will follow as needed.

[Learn More](#)

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# padlet

**JB MDL Virtual Message Board**



**theSITREP Podcast**

By: Department of Veterans Affairs  
Podcast



VIETNAM



GULF WAR



POST - 9/11

**WERE YOU EXPOSED TO BURN PITS,  
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U.S. Department  
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to speak with someone right away.



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

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or chat with us online**

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



U.S. Department  
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# VA



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### Featured Links

- [National Parks Pass](#)
- [VALife Insurance](#)
- [VA Urgent Care Services](#)
- [VA Caregiver Support Program](#)
- [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



## **Wreaths for Remembrance Ceremony**

On December 5, 2025, Gloucester County Director Frank J. DiMarco and Commissioner Tom Bianco, Liaison to Gloucester County Veterans Affairs, were joined by Monroe Township officials for the County's annual Wreaths for Remembrance Ceremony at the [Gloucester County Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#) in Williamstown.

Families gathered early in the morning to place wreaths on the graves of their loved ones, honoring more than 3,900 veterans laid to rest at the cemetery - each representing a powerful story of courage, sacrifice, and service.

*Image and caption courtesy Gloucester County Newsletter.*



## Generous Donation

The Edison VFW 3117 Veterans Post made a substantial donation of \$3,100 to the Menlo Park Veterans Home, generously contributed by participants of our annual 5K run. It is heartening to witness the donation amount increase annually.

*Image and caption courtesy [Edison VFW 3117](#).*

**In The News**



## **Bridgewater Commons Hosts Second Annual New Jersey National Guard Army Band Holiday Concert**

*Donnella Tilery | Raritan Neighbors NJ | December 15, 2025*

Bridgewater Commons proudly hosted its second annual New Jersey National Guard Army Band Holiday Concert last weekend.

The Army Band, composed of 26 soldiers representing a wide range of instrumentation, performed classic holiday favorites alongside the Santa Experience, delighting hundreds of shoppers throughout the center.

[Read Full Story](#)

## Servicemember Spotlight



### **Senior Airman Samantha DeLeon**

The Best of the Best - the [108th Wing](#) announced its annual award winners for FY 2025. Among the awardees was SrA Samantha DeLeon who was Airman of the Year.

Congratulations to all!



### **Staff Sergeant Sabirah SheerMohamed**

Congratulations to Staff Sgt. Sabirah SheerMohamed, [42nd Regional Support Group](#), New Jersey Army National Guard, Task Force Integrator S4 logistic noncommissioned officer in charge, at Erbil, Iraq, for being chosen as the [Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve](#) Hero of the Week for the week of December 1 - 8, 2025.

**Veteran Spotlight**



## Colonel Howard Housel's 1944 Christmas Story

*Editors Note:* Below is an excerpt. Read COL Housel's full narrative at [1944 Christmas Story](#). Watch his oral history interview recorded in October 2012 for the [Library of Congress](#).

After things had quieted down again, and yes we did expend a dozen or so 'rounds' on Jerry's behalf, Freddy retrieved a fiddle and began quietly playing a few selections.

First a couple of semi-classical tunes, anything is good. Then swinging into a few of the more noted numbers heard on the BBC and Armed Forces Network.

Getting into the late hours, someone reminded Freddy, that it was Christmas Eve. Freddy acknowledged by hitting on a few well-known carols. We got carried away, the season, the music, the thoughts obliterated the presence of our time and circumstances.

At first, a slight humming, then low singing, no one conscious of an increasing volume in sound output by some 14 or 15 voices.

Expectably, we came to that world-recognized carol, Silent Night. This was a Christmas song with its beginnings in Germany as "Stille Nacht". At the conclusion, Freddy put his bow down, ready to call it a night.

Suddenly, the stillness was broken. Not until now did we realize how quiet it had become - no noise, no voices, no firing.

Then, from across the road, down near the river, came a voice, that said something like "Sehr Gute - Sehr Gute, American, Grossa - Grossa", interlaced with "more - more - more".

In the stillness, in the darkness, Freddy's fiddle had led our voices in the night. A night that heard no shot, no shell, within our area, as Freddy played well into the daylight hours.

Today, as we recall that Christmas Eve, that time honored, birth date, we still wonder at the spell worked by that time, that place, that music. A spell of Hope for all who believed in Hope.

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### **Robert Gibson**

Happy holidays to D-Day veteran Robert Gibson from all of us at DMAVA and his buddies at [Spruce Run Memorial VFW Post 5119](#) in Glen Gardner, NJ.

# 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**



Artifacts displayed at the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey.

**December 24, 1814**

The Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812, was signed in Belgium. New Jersey militiamen continued to stand guard along the state's coastline from Sandy Hook to Delaware Bay into the new year of 1815, however, since the United States Senate did not ratify the treaty until February.

### **December 25, 1776**

On Christmas night, General George Washington led 2,400 men across the Delaware River in rain, sleet and snow at McKonkey's Ferry, north of Trenton. At 4:00 AM the following morning, the force began to march south in two columns towards Trenton.

### **December 26, 1776**

At around 8:00 AM, General Washington's force attacked Colonel Johann Rall's 1,500 man Trenton garrison. The Americans inflicted almost 1,000 casualties, most of them prisoners, on Rall's Hessians, and mortally wounded the colonel himself in a victory that saved the Revolution. Despite legend, folklore and British blame-

shifting, the Hessians were not drunk as a result of a Christmas celebration, but were in a precarious tactical position and caught by surprise by Washington's daring maneuvers and impeccable leadership.

### **December 27, 1782**

The last recorded land encounter of the American Revolution, a skirmish between Patriot militia and Loyalist raiders, took place at Cedar Bridge Tavern, in today's Stafford Township.

### **December 30, 1776**

General George Washington returned to Trenton from Pennsylvania and prepared to fight a British force advancing from Princeton.

### **January 1, 1781**

The Pennsylvania Line regiments of the Continental Army, encamped for the winter at Jockey Hollow near Morristown, mutinied over a lack of supplies, length of service time and pay issues.

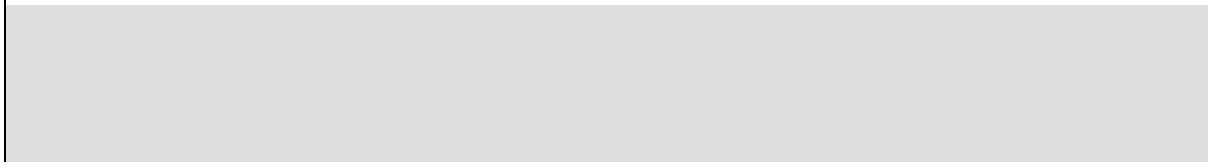
### **January 2, 1777**

Following the Second Battle of Trenton along Assunpink Creek, which resulted in a stalemate, General George Washington disengaged his army from contact with the British and slipped away

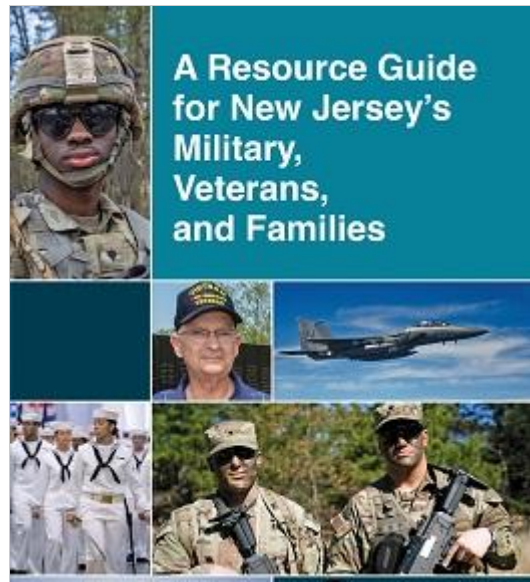
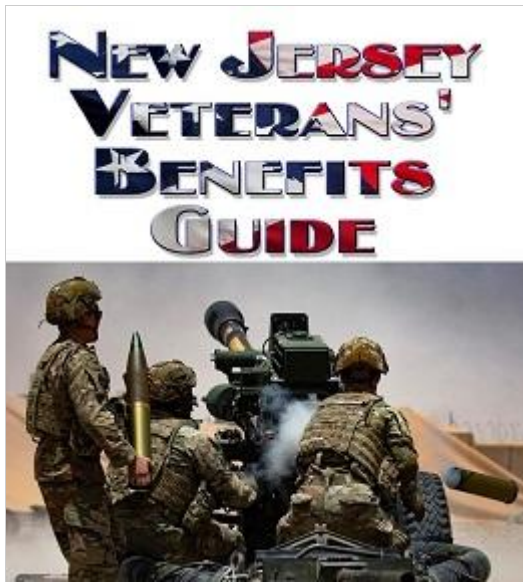
during the night, headed for Princeton.

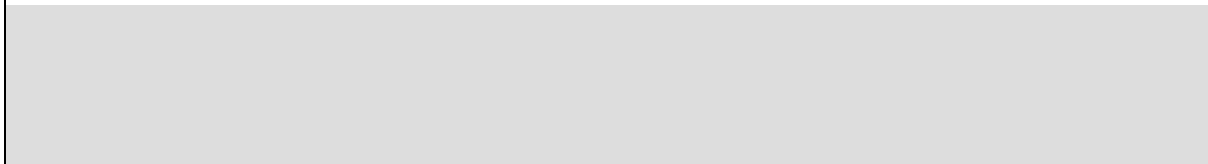
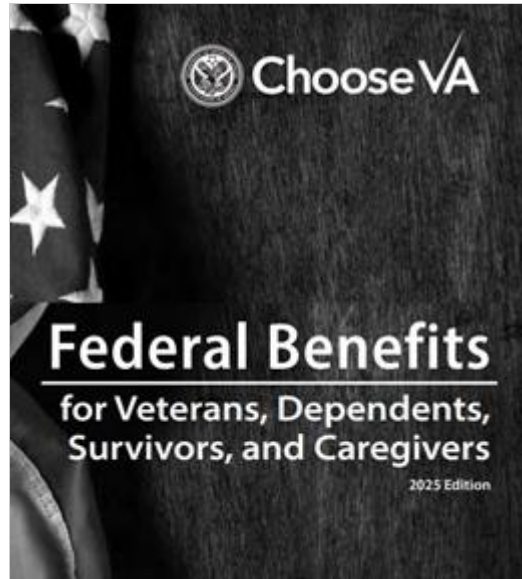
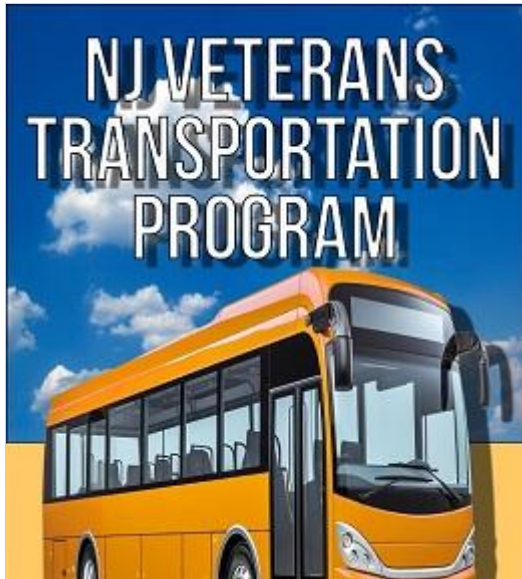
### **January 3, 1777**

General George Washington defeated the British force at Princeton and quickly moved on to Morristown, where he established a winter camp and rebuilt his army.



## **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**



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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](#)

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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.

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