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January 8, 2025



DMAVA

**Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs**

Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner



Vineland Veterans Home Achieves Five Stars

Recently, the Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland was awarded an overall five-star rating from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This important achievement reflects the hard work of our dedicated healthcare heroes and is the result of positive findings from independent health inspections, staffing levels, and resident-level quality measures of clinical care. This recognition follows the 2023 award of the five-star rating to the Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus.

How are these ratings determined? Health inspection ratings are based upon the three most recent surveys, or inspections, conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) on behalf of CMS. The staffing rating is based upon the number of nursing hours per resident per day and the number of registered

nurse hours per resident per day. The quality measure rating is informed by individual resident health status in multiple care areas. For example, weight for each of our residents is tracked as an individual quality measure, routinely reviewed by our quality assurance teams, and informs this important benchmark of facility performance.

Here at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, we are committed to constant and never-ending improvement in our three homes. Vineland's and Paramus' achievement of an overall five-star rating, and Menlo Park's clinical deficiency-free surveys in 2024, reflect a deliberate process of assessment and improvement begun under my predecessor. I am so pleased with the progress that has been documented by CMS, DOH, and in other inspections conducted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Five out of five stars is where we want to be. I congratulate and offer my personal thanks to everyone – the staff, volunteers, and families – who dedicate their time, talent, and energy to ensuring that Vineland is a safe and welcoming community for the Veterans, Veteran Spouses, and Gold Star Families who call our facility home.

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.

Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays
Adjutant General & Commissioner



Featured Event



Cumberland One-Stop Career Center



VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR



**Local & Regional Employers
Seeking to Hire Veterans**

Legal Services

**Vocational & Social
Services**

**Veteran Health & Benefits
Information (VSO)**

Snacks & Refreshments

**Wednesday, January 15, 2025
2pm - 4pm**



**Center for Workforce & Economic Development
Rowan College Campus
3322 College Drive, Vineland, NJ 08360**

Use North Entrance and follow "Vet Fair" Signage to
Parking Lot M

**JOB SEEKERS
PRE-REGISTER HERE:**



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 15 | Vineland
[Cumberland County Veterans Resource Fair](#)
- January 16 | Moorestown
[Veterans Outreach Campaign & Medal Ceremony](#)
- January 22 | Franklin Twp
[Veterans Town Hall hosted by Assemblyman Joe Daniels](#)

Community Calendar

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

[**View Full Calendar**](#)

2024 Year in Review



NJ National Guard



Jersey Blues home for the holidays after CENTCOM deployment

Maj. Amelia Thatcher | NJNG | December 23, 2024

Lawrenceville, N.J. - More than 1,500 Soldiers of the New Jersey Army National Guard returned to their loved ones between Thanksgiving week and December 22, 2024, ending a harrowing year of the [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#)'s overseas deployment in Iraq, Syria and Kuwait.

“I am overjoyed to have welcomed every single one of our Soldiers safely home this past month,” said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Yvonne L. Mays, The Adjutant General of New Jersey. “This deployment was the New Jersey National Guard’s largest since 2008 and occurred during high tensions in the Middle East following the start of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and immediately prior to the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. Their years of rigorous training paid off and our prayers for their safety were answered.”

U.S. Army Col. Brian Stramaglia and Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin

Kirkpatrick led the 44th IBCT throughout the nine-month deployment in support of [Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve](#), where the Jersey Blues served as the base command and combined arms maneuver element. There, the New Jersey-led formation included Soldiers of the 1-181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard and 1-121st Infantry Regiment, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Georgia Army National Guard.

“We did our duty to the state and nation,” said Col. Stramaglia. “I am incredibly proud of our Jersey Blues, who have given so much in service time and again. Now, getting them home to our families is the most important thing. I am so very grateful to the extended New Jersey family for their boundless support, from the moment we received the warning order more than two years ago, to now as we step off the buses here at home station, through the next 90 days into the new year and Yellow Ribbon.”

Throughout their deployment, the Soldiers of the 44th IBCT earned more than 650 combat action badges/combat infantryman badges/combat medical badges, 300 Bronze Stars, and more than a dozen Purple Hearts. The Jersey Blues faced multiple combat engagements, including ambush and enemy ground attack, indirect fire and more than 75 attacks from kamikaze drones.

Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve is dedicated to the defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and the advising, assisting and enabling of the Iraqi Security Forces,

Syrian Democratic Forces and Syrian Free Army within the United States Central command area of responsibility.

Images from the deployment can be viewed at [44th IBCT OIR](#).
Homecoming images can be viewed at [44th IBCT Returns Home](#).

[DVIDS News Feature](#)

Join Our Team

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



DMAVA Veterans Services



Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs

Vincent Solomeno, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, joined Hamilton Township Mayor Jeff Martin for *This Month in Hamilton* on December 17, 2024.

[Watch YouTube Video](#)



Kristin Poulsen, Union County VSO

Kristin Poulsen is the DMAVA Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for Union County.

If you know anyone in need of assistance regarding Veteran's benefits, please contact Kristin or one of her colleagues by visiting our website at [Veterans Service Offices](#).

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](#)

Veteran Service Providers

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

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

**INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING
GROUP COUNSELING
FAMILY COUNSELING**

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

OR CALL:

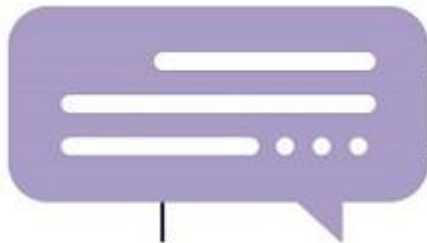
(888) 865-8387,

OR EMAIL:

VBB@DMAVA.NJ.GOV



SUPPORT IS PEER TO PEER



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



NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline

888-865-8387

vbb@dmava.nj.gov

Veterans Outreach Schedule

Veterans Service Offices

DMAVA Departments

NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.



Now accepting applications
for Class 59 - January 2025.

**APPLY
NOW!**

**TUITION
FREE**



FOR MORE INFORMATION:



njyca.org/admissions



rpm@dmava.nj.gov



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

NJ National Guard Family Programs

December 2024

State Partners



NJ State Agencies

- [Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicides among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families](#)
- [The New Jersey's Governor "We Value Our Veterans" Awards](#)
- [Vote For Valor](#)
- [Career Services for Veterans](#)
- [Tax Resources for Military/Veterans](#)
- [Educator Certification for Military Spouses and Veterans](#)
- [Civil Service Preference for Veterans](#)
- [NJ National Guard Hunting / Fishing Licenses](#)
- [NJ Special Hawker and Peddlers License](#)

- [Veterans Designation for Drivers License](#)
- [Military CDL Skills Waiver Program](#)
- [Disabled Veteran / Purple Heart Recipient Placards](#)
- [Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing Licenses](#)
- [Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business](#)
- [Division of Consumer Affairs Military Outreach & Support](#)
- [Professional & Occupational Licenses for Veterans and Spouses](#)
- [Military and Overseas Voting](#)
- [Veterans & Spouses Entering the Educator Workforce](#)
- [Journey Through Jersey](#)

Federal Partners



Veterans may be eligible for one more year of G.I. Bill benefits

VA News | January 3, 2025

Are you a Veteran who served at least two periods of service? In other words, [did you reenlist](#)? If so, there's a chance that you're eligible for additional G.I. Bill benefits.

Today, VA announced that it has updated its process for awarding G.I. Bill benefits. This means that many Veterans who served multiple periods of military service ([for example, Veterans who reenlisted](#)) may be eligible for additional benefits for themselves or their beneficiaries.

Specifically, under the previous policy, eligible Veterans who served at least two periods of service were forced to choose between the [Montgomery GI Bill](#) and the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) for a maximum of 36 months of G.I. Bill benefits. Under the updated policy, Veterans will no longer have to make that choice when they apply for benefits, meaning that they can qualify for up to 48 months of G.I. Bill benefits.

[Learn More](#)

Prepare for VA's secure sign-in changes

In 2025, you'll have 2 secure sign-in account options (Login.gov and ID.me) for all VA websites and apps.

The VA will remove the My HealthVet option after January 31, 2025, and the DS Logon option after September 30, 2025. You'll still be able to use your My HealthVet health portal - you will just need to sign in to it with a Login.gov or ID.me account.

[Learn More](#)





VIETNAM



GULF WAR



POST - 9/11

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



**Apply for VA
health care today
at VA.gov/PACT.**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Have questions?

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



The Women Veterans Call Center is Your Guide to VA

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

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

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Featured Links

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

Did You Know?



Use of Facilities

Through an active community relations program, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs strives to be a good neighbor and community partner.

As a result, many of the facilities maintained by DMAVA are available for public use. Potential users can inquire about availability and obtain a no obligation cost estimate.

[Learn More](#)

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

GUARDLIFE

In The New Jersey National Guard
Volume II, No. 5, 1985



Guardlife Magazine

January 5, 1861

John McGowan of Elizabeth, a former Revenue Marine (Coast Guard) officer who established lifesaving stations along the New Jersey coast, sailed the unarmed ship Star of the West into Charleston Harbor on a mission to resupply Fort Sumter. When his vessel was hit by two rounds from a shore battery, McGowan withdrew. Some count these as the actual first shots of the Civil War.

January 6, 1777

General William Howe ordered Elizabethtown abandoned by British troops due to constant harassment by the New Jersey militia as the forage war heated up.

January 6, 1941

The 102nd Cavalry of the New Jersey National Guard was called to active duty and assigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for training. The 102nd went on to participate in the Normandy Invasion, landing on D-Day plus two under the command of iconic

New Jersey soldier Colonel Donald McGowan, and had the honor of being the first United States unit to enter Paris in August 1944.

January 12, 1777

Continental Army General Hugh Mercer died of the bayonet wounds he had received at the battle of Princeton. Mercer County was subsequently named in his honor.

January 15, 1961

Twenty-eight men, US Air Force and civilian personnel, were killed after the collapse of Texas Tower #4, a massive radar installation in the Atlantic Ocean seventy-five miles off the New Jersey coast, in a winter storm. The tower, one of three similar structures named for their resemblance to Gulf of Mexico oil rigs, was designed to provide early warning of a Soviet air attack so that Nike Hercules antiaircraft missiles could respond. Dubbed "Old Shaky" by the men who worked aboard it because of its tendency to shift in the ever-moving ocean, the structure was built on three pilings in 185 feet of water. Following the disaster the remaining towers were decommissioned.

January 15, 1865

At the Second Battle of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, nineteen-year-old US Marine Corps Corporal Andrew J. Tomlin of the Goshen section of Middle Township, Cape May County, inspired his men to hold the line against a Confederate attack and rescued a fellow Marine who

was wounded and under heavy fire. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic conduct.

January 15, 1942

The British oil tanker Coimbra was sunk by a German submarine 100 miles east of Sandy Hook and twenty-eight miles south of Long Island, signaling the arrival of World War II to New Jersey waters. The tanker was sailing unescorted, with its lights on, and was hit at 1:40 AM. Of the forty-six man crew, ten survived.

Resources

**A Resource Guide
for New Jersey's
Military,
Veterans,
and Families**

**NEW JERSEY
VETERANS'
BENEFITS
GUIDE**

**NJ VETERANS
TRANSPORTATION
PROGRAM**

THIS PROGRAM OFFERS RIDES TO:

VA MEDICAL CENTERS CLINICS OTHER HOSPITALS	PRIVATE PHYSICIANS VA REGIONAL OFFICES VETERAN SERVICE OFFICES
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Choose VA

Federal Benefits
for Veterans, Dependents,
Survivors, and Caregivers

2025 Edition

DMAVA Careers



We Are Hiring!

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

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

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

Vacancies

Stay Connected



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

[Contact DMAVA](#)

Please email us at 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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nj.gov/military

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