

DMAVA Highlights

July 9, 2009 Volume 9 Number 24



108th Airmen return from deployment

By Sgt. Wayne Woolley, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

The 108th made it home for The Fourth.

A final group of nearly 180 Airmen from the 108th Air Refueling Wing arrived at McGuire Air Force Base last week in advance of Independence Day to end a two-month deployment in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

With an aviation package that included four KC-135s, the unit flew more than 1,200 hours in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility over 60 days, according to 1st Lt. April Kelly, the Wing public affairs officer.

The Airmen were based at Al Udeid Air Base near the Persian Gulf.

By now, the Airmen of the 108th are familiar with that part of the world, having filled more than 4,800 positions in support of contingency deployments.



Give your flags the proper disposal

By Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

Be on the lookout for special containers in the lobbies of Joint Force Headquarters and the Lawrenceville main building. On the way are containers for everyone to place their old, faded and tattered American flags for proper disposal.

The flags will be taken to the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Cemetery where every year flags are burned and the ashes are buried during the annual Veterans Day ceremony.

In the "Respect for the Flag" section of the United States Flag Code, it says, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

After your old flags have been sent their resting place, purchase a new flag. In New Jersey, U.S. flags and New Jersey flags are exempt from the sales tax. Poles and finials that are sold separately will be taxed but if sold as a set with the flag, it is not subject to tax. See <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/flag.shtml> for more information on taxes on flags.

NJNG Honor Guard looking for a few good men and women

The New Jersey National Guard Honor Guard Program is looking for new members to serve at funerals of veterans around the state.

Retirees and active National Guard members of the Army and Air Guard can apply for the openings. Retirees with 20 years or more of service from any branch can also apply. The Honor Guard members are men and women, enlisted and officers.

All personnel must meet Army/Air Force height and weight standards of AR 600-9 and their appearance must meet AR 670-1 standards.

Current Guard members are paid one day's active duty pay, but no less than \$50 plus one retirement point for each day's work. Retirees receive \$50 per day.

Many days can find the Honor Guard with more than one mission during the day; but each person registers for the time they are available. Most services take place within a 50 mile radius of their assigned Honor Guard Office; hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Some missions can be done in the evening hours. The Honor Guard provides services seven days a week, depending on the schedule of missions.

The N.J. National Guard Honor Guard Program provides services mostly for Army veterans but has worked at other branch's funerals.

There is an initial training period for all personnel. Everyone will be taught how to perform all assignments and phases of the ceremony. If someone has a special talent such as bugle playing for Taps, it is greatly appreciated.

Anyone interested must contact the program office at 609-530-7090. They will be referred to a local regional team leader to establish an appointment time and location for an interview or in the case of a bugler, an audition.

Recruiters for the program will also be at the upcoming job fairs at Fort Dix – July 29 and 30 – and Atlantic City – August 17 and 18.

NJ World War II Memorial



For information or to make a donation, call 609-530-7049.

Some folks look at me and see a certain swagger, which in Texas is called "walking."

--George W. Bush, 43rd President of the United States

DMAVA Highlights

Two N.J. Employers Named National Finalists for 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award

By Kryn P. Westhoven, ESGR Public Affairs Volunteer
ARLINGTON, Va. –The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation of Short Hills, N.J. and Net Jets of Woodbridge, N.J. have been selected as two of 35 national finalists for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The award is the U.S. Government's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is also significant because only members of the National Guard and Reserve or their family members may nominate their employers for the award.

"We are excited to see a pair of Garden State employers making the final cut," said retired Army Col. Carmen A. Venticinquie, State Chairman of the New Jersey Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Field Committee. Last year the Jersey City Fire Department was one of the fifteen to receive the Freedom Award.

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and Net Jets, nominated by a Reserve Component service member in Ohio, were selected from more than 3,200 nominations submitted. From the 35 finalists, a national selection board comprised of senior defense officials and business leaders will select the 15 recipients of the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, which will be announced by the Department of Defense in July. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., Sept. 17, 2009 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Lend your skills to help build home for injured New Jersey soldier

Homes for Our Troops is building a handicap accessible home in Union Beach for U. S. Army Sgt. Michael Minard who lost both legs due to an IED roadside bomb in Iraq on Oct. 1, 2007.

Minard was deployed with the 1-2 SCR Stryker Brigade, Fort Carson, Colo.; it was his third deployment to Iraq.

Anyone wishing to donate their construction expertise, material, skills, or make financial donations should contact Jack McNaboe at 732-439-4484 or e-mail JMcNaboe331@aol.com. Join the workers for an hour, a day, a weekend; whatever time you can spare. For more information about Minard, visit www.sgtminard.org.

DMAVA Green

By Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

New Jersey is known as the Garden State and what is "more" green than gardens?

Some people don't have space or ability to grow their own fruits, vegetables or herbs. But here in New Jersey, you can find lots of fresh produce to fill your table.

Visit www.state.nj.us/jerseyfresh/searches/urban.htm to find lots of information on the availability of produce and other products.

You will find a chart with the early, most active and late harvest dates for fruits and veggies; making sure you get the sweet corn, tomatoes and salad fixings in prime season.

If you are taking a drive through the countryside over the weekend, check out the list of roadside markets for the area you will be cruising – grab some fresh cherries or blueberries for your picnic lunch.

Or make a family adventure and find a pick-your-own farm and gather your family's favorite fruit for a pie for Sunday dinner, freeze some for this winter or make some homemade jam for a special treat. Having picked strawberries – uncomfortable job and not a lot of fun – and blueberries – that was fun and provided us with fruit for pies and more for freezing – I will say it can be a great experience.

Staying close to home? Check the site for a list of local farm markets. I am lucky, about five blocks from my home there is a great farmer's market celebrating its 10th anniversary that runs every Saturday from 8 a.m.-noon, from the beginning of May until November. Maybe you can find one near you.

Stay Green!

Quotes

Some people die at 25 but aren't buried until 75.

--Benjamin Franklin

A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you, will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts, and not on marble.

--Charles Spurgeon

After God created the world, he made man and woman. Then, to keep the whole thing from collapsing, he invented humor.

--Guillermo Mordillo

He who plants thorns must never expect to gather roses.

--Arabian proverb

DMAVA Highlights is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the National Guard, the Veterans Affairs or the state of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJD-MAVA, DMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, PO Box 340, Trenton NJ 08625-0340. E-mail at pao@njdmava.state.nj.us.

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

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Col. James J. Grant – Joint Staff Director

Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer

Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison – Public Affairs Specialist

Wounded Soldier and Family
Hotline
1-800-984-8523

Families

Prescription plan available

For individuals without a prescription insurance plan, this program offers discounts on generic and brand name prescription medications at your local pharmacy. You do not have to qualify and there is no cost to join. There is no income, residence, employment, age, citizenship or any other qualifications to meet. Not even an application to fill out. For additional information and to print the Group ID Card, go to www.mediservrx.com or contact your nearest Family Assistance Center.

N.J. SHARES helps with utility bills

New Jersey SHARES helps households that have fallen behind on their utility bills due to a temporary financial crisis. A financial crisis can happen to anyone, regardless of age, income or family situation. A crisis is often due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a job loss or illness. We provide assistance to households that are not eligible for other types of public assistance. Applicants must demonstrate a temporary financial need and a history of good-faith payments to their energy provider. NJ SHARES is designed to help people who are going through short-term financial problems. Applicants must show a history of paying bills on time and that events have occurred that cause hardship in paying bills now. Funding is limited and based on first come first served so visit the following websites to get more information. THIS IS A GRANT, NOT A LOAN so check it out to see if you may be eligible for this!! Visit www.njshares.org.

Family Readiness Council offers grants

The New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council has increased the amounts of family and business grants up to \$5,000 and \$10,000, respectively. Both are what are known as TIER I grants. TIER II family grants are also available to New Jersey Army and Air National Guard non-deployed service members who were on State Active Duty or State Missions (e.g., hurricanes, floods, border missions) for more than 20 consecutive days. Service members meeting these criteria are eligible to apply for a financial hardship grant up to \$1,500. Applications are available at all New Jersey Army and Air National Guard Family Assistance Centers.

State Family Programs
101 Eggert Crossing Road, Lawrenceville
Toll-free number 1-888-859-0352
Family Assistance – 609-530-6834/6884
State Youth Coordinator – 609-530-6836
Military Family Life consultants – 609-530-6835/6886
Yellow Ribbon Program – 609-530-6846/6853/6859
Fax – 609-530-6871

Governor's Island offers free kids program on Fridays

Take the kids to the free Friday Programs for Kids at the Governors Island National Monument through August 14, 10:15 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join National Park Service Rangers for kid-friendly programs which run continually through the summer on Friday mornings. Children will have the opportunity to meet with National Park Rangers or an array of "guests" from the past such as a Union Soldier, a member of the Women's Army Corps, a Confederate Prisoner or a middle class lady from 1863.

Contact the Lower Manhattan Cultural Center at lowdown@lmcc.net for more information.

Financial counseling helps military families

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

The Military Housing Assistance Fund (MHAF) helps military families to become homeowners by providing them with grants to assist them with purchasing a home. The Fund also provides financial counseling to members of the National Guard and Reserves, deployed and serving in combat zones overseas, which are having problems meeting their monthly obligations due to their deployment and activation. Learn more at <http://www.militaryhousingassistancefund.org>. The Fund is a project of the Financial Counselors of America (FCA), a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization founded in 1991 to help Americans manage their finances and get out of debt. Visit the FCA website at <http://www.financialcounselors.org>.

Organization assists with counseling for families

Are you, the kids, or other family members having a tough time dealing with getting ready for deployment of a loved one? Are you having a tough time dealing with things during the deployment? Are you having a tough time dealing with things after the deployment? Military Family Life Consultants can help you and your family problem solve with issues resulting from deployment, reunions, reintegration and other times of change including:

- Marriage and Relationship Issues
- Family Issues
- Stress and Anxiety
- Depression
- Grief and Loss
- Anger management
- Parent and child communication

Soldiers and families are entitled to six prepaid, face-to-face counseling sessions. New Jersey has two MFLC on our staff in the State Family Programs Office. Contact them at: Jeff at 609-530-6886, cell 609-694-7020 or jeffrey.p.hoerger@healthnet.com or Jill at 609-530-6835, cell: 732-284-8220 or jill.c.barrett@mhn.com.

State Employees

Changing name? Moving? Let them know!

From the desk of Lisa Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

If you are a state employee, working for DMAVA, Vets Haven, and the Cemetery, and you have an address change and/or a name change, it is extremely important that you contact Lisa Dandrea in the Human Resources Office. There have been a lot of issues with tax W2s, pension statements and pay checks being returned to our office, as well as some employees not receiving their new health cards, all due to incorrect addresses. Your address change is not automatic and it is not limited to completing a new W4. There are specific forms for employees to complete that updates their new information statewide. Your change of address or name affects your paycheck, your pension statements, W2s, loans, any information sent out by your health care provider, promotional announcements from Dept. of Personnel, etc. If you have had an address/name change and have not updated your information, please make sure you contact Lisa Dandrea in HRD-ESB at 609-530-6888 or e-mail Lisa.Dandrea@njdmava.state.nj.us.

Sea Girt beach passes now available for DMAVA employees

NGTC Sea Girt beach passes are now available. If you have not already received yours, contact Gail Miller at 609-530-6911, gail.miller@njdmava.state.nj.us to get your passes.

Information to remember:

DMAVA employees can use the employee ID card or NJ military ID for admission to the beach.

Passes can be issued to family members and friends, but each pass is to be issued to only one person.

Each pass will admit all occupants of one car to the beach. The pass is good for the entire season.

On the back of the pass there are two lines to fill in:

☒ First line: You or the person **who will be using** the pass (name/guest) must **print** his/her name on the first line. Guests may also be asked to show a driver's license or other photo ID.

☒ Second line (unit/sponsor): You must **print** your name and DMAVA division or unit.

For more information, see TAG Memorandum 2-09 dated 10 February 2009 at http://www.nj.gov/military/publications/tag-memo_09/TAGMEMO-2-09.pdf.



MBOS required for state employees to update info

From the desk of Lisa J. Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

MBOS is the Member Benefits Online System. Through MBOS, employees may review their pension contributions, loan status, health benefits information, update their beneficiary information, apply for retirement, as well as many other applications. It has been encouraged that all employees register for this helpful tool. However Pensions is now working on MBOS being a requirement in order for employees to make certain updates to their personal information.

Effective immediately, in all cases where an employee is eligible to become a member of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the employer will be required to submit all enrollment information to Pensions via online. Important to note is that the online PERS Enrollment Application does not include the Designation of Beneficiary page. Instead, once the member is enrolled and issued a pension number, they must register for a MBOS account at: www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/mbosregister.htm and complete the online Beneficiary Designation form. Until the member completes his or her Designation of Beneficiary, the member's "Estate" will be the beneficiary of record.

Current employees –note, even if you are already enrolled into PERS, if you wish to make any changes to your beneficiary information, you too will need to be registered for MBOS. Members will not be able to submit the Change in Beneficiary Designation paper form since this will no longer be acceptable through the Division of Pensions and Benefits.

Visit the link above for complete instructions to register for MBOS. If you encounter any problems with registration, you may e-mail Pensions and Benefits with your questions/concerns and they can assist you through the process. You may also obtain a tri-fold brochure with MBOS instructions from your Human Resources Office.

No handbooks available for NJDIRECT

Inquiries about NEW handbooks and directories for NJDIRECT has prompted this reply from Pensions and Benefits:

"Unfortunately, we do not have NJ Direct Handbooks to give to members and will not be receiving a supply. Members may visit the NJ Direct website www.horizonblue.com/shbp. Members without computers are encouraged to use their local library or a relative's computer or call the plan directly."

You may also look up benefit information and visit the Unified Provider Directory on the Pensions and Benefits website under State Health Benefits Program.

Veterans & Military

Check your records when retiring

Here is some information from the Social Security Administration pertaining to military service earnings that may come in handy to those planning on retiring soon. You can find more about this credit at <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>.

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty, including active duty for training, you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. Special extra earnings credits are NOT given for inactive duty training. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

If your active military service occurred from 1957-1967, the extra credits will be added to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits. If the time was from 1968-2001, there is no need to do anything for the extra credits; they were automatically added to your record. Time after 2001 receives no special extra earnings.

How much is the credit? For service from 1957-1977, you will be credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay. For service from 1978-2001, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with \$100 in earnings up to a maximum in of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, and did not complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings.

NGANJ offers group life insurance

Are you covered by the NGANJ Group Life Insurance Program? As a member of either the Officers or the Enlisted Association, you are entitled to enroll in your Association Life Insurance Program. This special program provides from \$5,000 to \$50,000 of Life Insurance for you, "round the clock". Premiums range from as little as \$2 per month and may be payroll-deducted from your drill check. Family coverage is also available at low rates designed for you as a member of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard. Think of it!! No aviation exclusions...No hazardous duty restrictions...No war clauses...No checks to write. Family coverage includes spouses and all children. Information can be obtained by contacting retired CWO Jack Petrosilli at 609-530-6843, or retired Brig. Gen. Robert S. Dutko Sr. at 609-273-1004. Enrollment forms can be obtained by calling retired Col. Frank L. Carlone, Program Coordinator at 732-249-8335.

Direct Deposit VA benefits into checking or savings account now. Call 1-800-333-1795 or visit www.GoDirect.org

"Tunnel Rats in Vietnam" scheduled for July 18 at educational center

On Saturday, July 18, at 1 p.m., the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation will host "Going Underground: Tunnel Rats in Vietnam." This discussion about the important role that tunnel rats played in the war will be led by New Jersey Vietnam veterans Ronald E. Giles and John N. Scafidi. The program will be held at the Vietnam Era Educational Center, Holmdel. Light refreshments will be served.

Many of the tunnel and bunker complexes encountered in Vietnam had been under construction since the early days of the World War II occupation by the Japanese. They were more than places to hide. They were virtual cities underground that contained most of the essentials of life as well as booby traps. While most units early in the war had daring young men willing to go anywhere and try anything, the U.S. Army began formally training special volunteer soldiers for this purpose. In either case, the unofficial requirement was that soldiers over 5'6" need not apply. The Australians and New Zealanders were also highly skilled in this special form of warfare. The primary objective of a "tunnel rat" wasn't to flush out the enemy forces, but to gather intelligence, seize weapons, food and medical supplies from the complex system of tunnels. Our two presenters have very different perspectives on this topic. Ronnie was a tunnel rat himself, while John used tunnel rats in order to complete his operations.

Ronald (Ronnie) Giles of Hasbrouck Heights, served with the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968. From April 1966 to April 1967, he was stationed in Cu Chi, Vietnam as a tunnel rat with the A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division.

John Scafidi of Secaucus, served in the United States Marine Corps from 1965 to 1969. From October 1966 to November 1967, he was stationed in Vietnam assigned to the K Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

Lecture attendees are asked to RSVP to (732) 335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested. The Vietnam Era Educational Center is located adjacent to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116.

Veterans Organizations contact information

State Veterans Service Council
Richard Clark, RJClark21@msn.com
BG William C. Doyle Cemetery Advisory Council
William Rakestraw, warjrj@msn.com
Veterans Hotlines
Benefits and Entitlements
1-888-8NJ-VETS (1-888-865-8387)
Mental Health
1-866-VETS-NJ4 (1-866-838-7654)

Calendar

When – July 11, 1 p.m.

What – Change of Command; Col. Lori Thomas, incoming; Col. Anthony Formica, outgoing

Where – JT2DC, Fort Dix

When – July 12, 3 p.m.

What – Brig. Gen. John Nunn’s final formation

Where – Armory, Somerset, N.J.

When – July 19-24

What – NJNG Youth Camp

Where – National Guard Training Center, Sea Girt

More info – www.nj.gov/military/familysupport/youth_camp.html

When – July 21, 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

What – Post 9/11 GI Bill briefing

Where – Timmerman Center, Fort Dix

When – July 29, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and July 30, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

What – Ultimate Warrior Job Fair and workshop for OIF/OEF vets and spouses

Where – Timmerman Center, Fort Dix

More info – Sgt 1st Class Loranda Taylor, 609-864-2565, loranda.mitriecetaylor@us.army.mil



Aug. 23 Poker Run benefits scholarship funds

Join in the 4th Annual Memorial Poker Run, starting at The Pub, Country Lakes Shopping Center, 558 Lakehurst Road, Browns Mills, with the proceeds benefitting the Ryan T. Baker / Philip I. Spakosky Scholarship Fund and the Rolling Thunder (R) Inc. Chapter 2 New Jersey Scholarship Fund on Aug. 23.

All modes of transportation are welcome to the event. Registration is 9-11 a.m. Cost is \$10 donation for driver, \$5 for passenger.

End site for the run is the American Legion, Pemberton Julius-town Road, Pemberton. There will be door prizes, music by “DJ Don” and food. The event is sponsored by Rolling Thunder® NJ Chapter 2. For more information call 609-971-3544 or visit www.rollingthunder-nj2.org.

AUSA golf tourney scheduled for July 27

Come to the local AUSA Membership Drive Golf Tournament on July 27 at Sun Eagles Golf Course, Fort Monmouth. Shotgun start of the tourney is 8 a.m., with the awards luncheon at 1 p.m.

Cost to play in the tournament is \$40 for government/military (AUSA members); \$70 for government/military non-members; \$100 for industry AUSA members; and \$130 for industry non-members.

This is one of the many events the organization runs to support the Fisher House. On May 30, they donated more than \$150,000 to Fisher House and \$25,000 to Homes for Our Troops to help them build a house for Sgt. Mike Minard.

For a registration form or more information, contact Kit Roache at 732-380-9500, extension 202 or kit.roache@gdc4s.com. For AUSA membership information contact Tony Smith, tony.smith@us.army.mil, 732-427-5553.

Veterans Outreach Campaign schedule

The DMAVA Veterans Outreach Campaign has kiosk displays at malls throughout the state and other special events to help veterans and their family members discover and apply for the benefits they are eligible to receive.

July 28*, 29, 30	Ocean County Mall
Aug. 7***	First Energy Ball Park, Home of the Lakewood Blue Claws
Aug. 20***	Mercer County Waterfront Park, Home of the Trenton Thunder
Aug. 30****	TD Bank Ballpark, Home of the Somerset Patriots
Sept. 22*, 23, 24	Rockaway Townsquare Mall
Oct. 20**, 21, 22	Jersey Gardens Mall
Nov. 9*, 10	Woodbridge Center Mall
*Medal ceremony at 10:30 a.m.	
**Medal ceremony at 1 p.m.	
***Outreach program only, 7:05 p.m.	
****Outreach program only, 4:05 p.m.	

Deadline

Want to place an event or article in DMAVA Highlights?

Deadline for articles is noon Wednesday.

Send submissions to barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us.