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December 20, 2023



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner



Reflections

Accomplishments

The end of year holiday season is a very special time to reflect on our team's accomplishments and look ahead to the challenges that await us in the new year.

People have remained my number one priority this year and I am so excited about all DMAVA has achieved to support those who have served. These accomplishments reflect culminations of months and years of hard work.

Our DMAVA team and our many partners demonstrated commitment to our Veterans through truly countless service and outreach efforts. We have modernized our records management, learning management, Veteran Service referrals and emergency communication programs. External teams have validated the quality of our care in our three Veterans homes through multiple

inspections and high ratings, and we opened two new Veteran Services offices in Passaic County and Camden County. The preparations for opening five more offices in the coming months are underway.

Jersey Strong

None of this happened overnight. These achievements reflect several years of steady, hard work: planning, funding, training and deliberate implementation. Looking at all this team has accomplished in 2023, I am confident we are ready for our next challenges and opportunities in 2024.

As we wait to ring in the new year, please let us also take a moment to reflect on those serving overseas, including our National Guard Airmen, those preparing to deploy, including our National Guard Soldiers, their families, the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, and sacrifices of our Gold Star families.

Happy Holidays

From the DMAVA leadership team, please know we are sending our best wishes to you and yours.

As always, thank you for staying connected to DMAVA and be safe!

We invite you to share ideas, events and feedback. Please email our team at outreach@dmava.nj.gov.

Brigadier General Lisa J. Hou, D.O.
The Adjutant General & Commissioner



Featured Events



Multiple Dates and Locations
Free Eight-Hour Training Sessions

Mental Health First Aid Training

Learn How to Support Veterans

Intended for community organizations that interact with Service Members, Veterans, and their families at the local level, but is open for all interested participants.

[Learn More and Register](#)

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 5 | Lawrenceville
[Blood Drive](#)
- January 20 | Battleship New Jersey
[Camden County Veterans Outreach Retreat](#)
- January 21 | Bordentown
[Reserve & National Guard Transition Benefits Workshop](#)

Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

Spotlight



The Adjutant General presents outgoing Veterans Services Council Chairman Michael Berman, Esq. with a commander's coin and letter of appreciation for his many years of service.

Senate Confirms Veterans Services Council

On Thursday, December 7th (Pearl Harbor Day), the New Jersey Senate unanimously confirmed Governor Philip D. Murphy's nominees to serve on the Veterans Services Council.

Luddie Austin, Eddie Freeman, William Madigan, and Hannah Shock join Kadja Manuel and Nelson Mellitz, who were confirmed earlier this year.

DMAVA is grateful to the Council's outgoing members for their selfless service and commitment to Garden State Service Members, Veterans, and their families.

NJ National Guard



63rd Army Band

The New Jersey Army National Guard's [63rd Army Band](#) performed holiday classics for patrons at the American Dream Mall in East Rutherford, NJ on December 10, 2023.



Recruiting and Retention Battalion

The [Recruiting and Retention Battalion](#) of the New Jersey Army National Guard celebrated at the 2023 Recruiting and Retention Holiday Gala at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, NJ, on December 15, 2023.

The Recruiting and Retention Gala is an annual event where New Jersey Army National Guard recruiters can reflect on and celebrate a year of hard work.

Congratulations to Sergeant First Class Rembrandt Damian for being the top recruiter in New Jersey and receiving the National Guard Bureau's Director's 54 Award.

[View Images](#)

Join Our Team

100% Free College Tuition
Bonuses up to \$20,000
Student Loan Repayment



DMAVA Veterans Services



Trején Strickland, VSO

I am Trején Strickland, the Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs located at the Lawrenceville Armory.

My Bachelor's degree in Human and Social Sciences and Associate degrees have awarded me over 25 years of experience in serving disenfranchised populations. From children to the addicted and everyone in between. I was Certified HIV Pre and Post Test Counselor and a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counselor. Also, I've completed a host of trainings which include Child Abuse & Neglect.

I am excited to work exclusively with the military and issues surrounding the military. It is the hope that I'll be employed with DMAVA until retirement. So, I'll be here for a while.

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



World War II Memorial

DMAVA Director of Veterans Services Esther Chucaralao places a wreath at the [New Jersey World War II Memorial](#) in remembrance of the 2,403 military personnel and 68 civilians who lost their lives on December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor. The Memorial is located across from the Statehouse in Trenton.



Veterans Haven South

[Veterans Haven South](#) recognized seasonal affective disorder and human rights for their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Awareness Day in December. They gave away journal sets with journal prompts.

**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

The graphic features a dark blue banner at the top with the text "SUPPORT IS PEER TO PEER" in white, distressed font. Below the banner is a stylized illustration of a man with a beard and a headset, representing a peer support volunteer. To the left of the man is a purple speech bubble icon. Below the speech bubble is the text "Call Us 24/7 7 days a week (866) 838-7654". At the bottom left is the "NJ VETZVET" logo, which includes the letters "NJ" in blue and "VETZVET" in red, with a stylized American flag graphic.

NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline
888-865-8387
vbb@dmava.nj.gov

Veterans Outreach Schedule

Veterans Service Offices

DMAVA Departments



DMAVA Town Hall

U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., The Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, along with DMAVA and New Jersey National Guard leadership briefed state and federal employees and New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen at a Town Hall at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, NJ on December 7, 2023.

During the ceremony, Hou presented awards to DMAVA employees and New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

[View Images](#)

NEW JERSEY
YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
 DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

TUITION FREE

Now accepting applications for Class 57 - January 2024.

APPLY NOW!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 (800) 997-5587 / (732) 974-6516
 rpm@dmava.nj.gov
 njyca.org/admissions

The advertisement features a dark blue background with a white outline of New Jersey. A circular inset shows a group of people in high-visibility vests standing in front of a classical building with columns. A gold starburst graphic contains the text 'TUITION FREE'.

ORGANIZATION SOCIAL TOGETHER DIVERSITY
 BELONGING BELONGING PEOPLE RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER
 SUPPORT BELONGING RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER
COMMUNITY
 SOCIETY GROUP TEAM DIVERSITY CONNECTION
 PUBLIC RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER COMPANIONSHIP

Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

The graphic features the word 'COMMUNITY' in large white letters on a blue background. Surrounding the word are various icons and smaller text related to community, diversity, and social interaction. At the bottom, the text 'Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging' is displayed in a bold, dark font.

DEIB Newsletter

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 28, 2023.

The flags to be unveiled for display are some of the most distinctive in the collection, and they have not been on display for several years.

Included will be the national colors of the 5th and 11th Infantry regiments, the state colors of the 1st Infantry and 3rd Cavalry, and a Confederate flag captured by New Jersey troops on May 3, 1863 at the battle of Chancellorsville.

Two of the flags (1st and 5th) probably saw action at Gettysburg, and two color bearers fell casualty while bearing the flag of the 11th regiment in 1864.

[Learn More](#)



NJ State Agencies

- [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](#)
- [Troops to Teachers](#)



Federal Partners



**The Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season
Ends Jan. 1, 2024**

Check the DFAS Webpage for Important Deadlines and Eligibility Info

<https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>

Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season

Congress provided for a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Open Season in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. The SBP Open Season began on December 23, 2022 and ends on January 1, 2024.

The SBP Open Season allows for retirees receiving retired pay, eligible members, or former members awaiting retired pay who are currently NOT enrolled in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) to enroll.

The SBP Open Season also allows eligible members and former members who are currently enrolled in either SBP or RCSBP to permanently discontinue their SBP coverage.

[Learn More](#)

All WWII Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA health care and nursing home services

November 10, 2023

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA health care, medical services, and nursing home care.

All WWII Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are eligible under this expansion, regardless of their length of service or financial status. These Veterans will not have to pay copays, enrollment fees or monthly premiums.

VA is reaching out by phone and mail to encourage WWII Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA care to apply today. Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their health care needs.

[Read Full News Release](#)

VA now offers online ordering for CPAP supplies

December 4, 2023

Veterans who rely on CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines to manage sleep-related breathing disorders, including sleep apnea, now have a new [streamlined online ordering system for CPAP supplies](#).

VA has added the CPAP supply ordering feature as part of the online tool that's already in place, same as how veterans [order hearing aid supplies](#) on VA.gov. The addition improves how veterans order, manage and efficiently receive health care supplies. It's a notable improvement to the previous CPAP supply ordering process, which was by phone call or traditional mail order forms sent to VA's Denver Logistics Center (DLC).

[Read Full News Release](#)

VA has screened 5 million Veterans for toxic exposures

December 12, 2023

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it has screened 5 million Veterans for toxic exposures — a critical step to detecting, understanding, and treating potentially life-threatening health conditions. Of the 5 million Veterans who have received the screening, 2.1 million (43%) reported at least one potential exposure.

[Read Full News Release](#)

National Parks Pass

There is a new lifetime pass for National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands, called America the Beautiful.

This lifetime pass for Gold Star Families & Veterans is being offered to demonstrate the country's immense gratitude and respect for those who have served and defended our country.

[Learn More at VA News](#)

VALife Insurance

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) provides guaranteed acceptance whole life coverage of up to \$40,000 to Veterans with service-connected disabilities. Lesser amounts are available in increments of \$10,000. Under this plan, the elected coverage takes effect two years after enrollment as long as premiums are paid during the two-year period.

All Veterans age 80 or under with a VA disability rating of 0 to 100% are eligible for the VALife program and have no time limit to apply.

[Learn More](#)



Burlington County VA Clinic

Reaching the age of 100 is truly a blessing and huge milestone. But just imagine our excitement at being able to celebrate seven World War II Veterans ranging in age from 100 to 102 years of age!!

Well, our Nurse Manager Helen Webber at our [Burlington Community-Based Outpatient Clinic](#) in Marlton, New Jersey identified these centenarians and organized a party to recognize them all! And we had a grand old time celebrating them.

The men represented all branches of the military - Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy! One 101 year young Veteran and his wife of 74 years walked in together.

There was 102 year young US Coast Guard Veteran Robert McLaughlin, 101 year young US Navy Veteran Richard White, 101 year young Morris Dworkin, 100 year young US Marine Corps Veteran John Mengel and the exuberant 100 year young US Marine Corps Veteran Joseph DiBlassio. Absent were 101 year young US Army and US Air Force Veteran Paul Canton and 100 year young US Navy Veteran Donald Brink.

All Veterans were presented with a personalized signed letter from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough and his challenge coin by our Executive Medical Center Director Karen Flaherty-Oxler. In attendance too was US Congressman Andy Kim who presented each Veteran with a Certificate of Recognition from Congress. [View Facebook Post.](#)

Image and caption courtesy [Philadelphia VA Medical Center.](#)

Featured Links

- [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

Subscribe to #VetResources to receive a weekly newsletter from the VA for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Subscribe

Community Spotlight



VFW Post 9111

In spite of the lousy weather, [VFW Post 9111](#) in Kendall Park, NJ hosted a wonderful holiday luncheon for residents of [Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park](#).

Thank you to everyone who supported the event and for your hospitality!



Wreaths Across America

More than 400 volunteers, including New Jersey Civil Air Patrol Cadets; Lakewood High School Army Junior ROTC cadets, along with Boy and Girl Scouts placed 3,000 wreaths on gravestones at the [Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#) at Wrightstown, NJ on December 16, 2023.

The wreath laying was part of the 4,200 nationwide Wreaths Across America Day ceremonies.

[View Images](#)



New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial

New Jersey's fallen were honored during a wreath laying ceremony at the [New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#), Holmdel, NJ on December 13, 2023.

The ceremony was part of the Wreaths Across America convoy, which stopped at the Memorial during its annual trip to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. During the ceremony, wreaths were presented to Gold Star family members.

In addition, wreaths were placed at the base of each of the memorial's 366 eight-foot-tall black granite panels – each representing a day of the year – with the names of the 1,564 New

Jersey men and one woman who gave their lives while serving in Southeast Asia.

[View Images](#)

[News12 New Jersey](#)



The Military Support Group of New Jersey

The Military Support Group of New Jersey, chaired by Miss Karen Jennings, sponsored, packed and shipped a large quantity of care packages to our [177th Fighter Wing](#) Jersey Devils overseas.

Within these care packages are candy, Santa hats, stockings, small wrapped gifts and holiday cards.

Thank you to the [Military Support Group of New Jersey](#), Miss Karen Jennings, and the local community for supporting our Airmen this holiday season.



Family Child Care Program is back, and growing!

The Department of the Air Force is reviving a special Family Child Care program (FCC).

Military families, or other families in our communities, can open their homes as a small business to military families in need of childcare. This includes drill weekends for Guard and Reserve members seeking childcare!

Oversight and restrictions apply, please contact Alicia Stasiulis at cia.stasiulis.1@us.af.mil and (609) 562-2192 for details.

Never Forget



In Honor of all those from New Jersey who gave their lives in the fight against terrorism during Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. In humble gratitude, we remember their sacrifice.

December 21, 2002
Operation Enduring Freedom

SGT Steven Checo

U.S. Army
Elizabeth, New Jersey

January 1, 2005
Operation Iraqi Freedom

LCpl Brian P. Parrello

U.S. Marine Corps
West Milford, New Jersey

December 25, 2006
Operation Iraqi Freedom

PFC Eric R. Wilkus

U.S. Army
Hamilton, New Jersey

January 2, 2004
Operation Iraqi Freedom

SPC Marc S. Seiden

U.S. Army
Brigantine, New Jersey

December 25, 2008
Operation Iraqi Freedom

MAJ John P. Pryor

U.S. Army
Moorestown, New Jersey

January 3, 2008
Operation Iraqi Freedom

CPT Thomas J. Casey

U.S. Army
Cape May Point, New Jersey

"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



Season Greetings from the NJ Air National Guard in 1948.

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**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

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.

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.



December 15, 1775

The First New Jersey Battalion of the Continental Army completed its organization and enlisted for one year's service. The unit was composed in part of existing militia companies from Essex County.

The New Jersey Army National Guard's 113th Infantry Regiment of the [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#) traces their history to this first muster of troops.

The unit has served under several different designations, including the 1st New Jersey Militia Regiment, Militia of Essex County, the Essex Brigade, the Newark Brigade, and the 1st Regiment Newark Brigade.

The regimental motto is that of the old 1st New Jersey Infantry "Fidelis et Fortis" -- Faithful and Brave.



In The News



JB MDL conducts AFFORGEN exercise: Jersey Dawn 23

87th Air Base Wing Public Affairs | December 12, 2023

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST - Members assigned to units from across Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst participated in the Air Force Force Generation exercise Jersey Dawn 23, a seven-day training event held Dec. 4-10, 2023.

The mobility AFFORGEN exercise enabled mission partners to collaborate and showcase emergency management and deployment readiness, while an Air Mobility Command Inspector General team assessed the installation's ability to conduct and evaluate an exercise properly. Airmen assigned to the 87th Air Base Wing, the 621st Contingency Response Wing, the 305th Air Mobility Wing, the 514th AMW and the 108th Wing worked together to execute pre-deployment functions. This was then followed by a deployment to Naval Support Activity Lakehurst.

[Read Full Story](#)

Soldier Spotlight



Private Anthony Del Tufo

National Guard soldiers have dual roles in American society: they serve as citizen-soldiers, meaning they have a responsibility to local communities.

Private Anthony Del Tufo is a soldier in the New Jersey Army National Guard. Private Del Tufo received a community award for fulfilling this duty.

The Township of Nutley, NJ, honored Del Tufo for ensuring the safety of two citizens during a potentially catastrophic house fire.

Such acts of bravery exemplify the warrior ethos and the values that all soldiers should strive to uphold.

Did You Know?

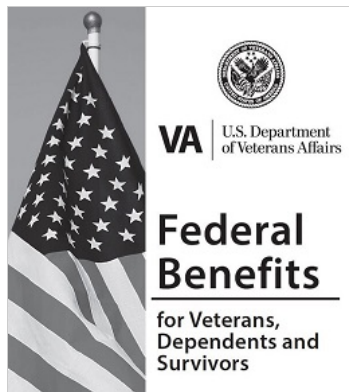
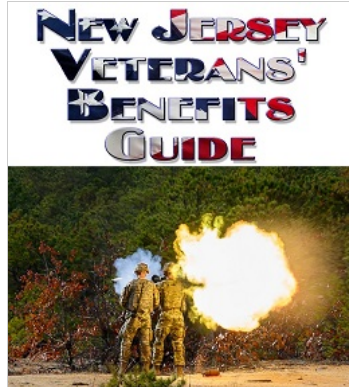
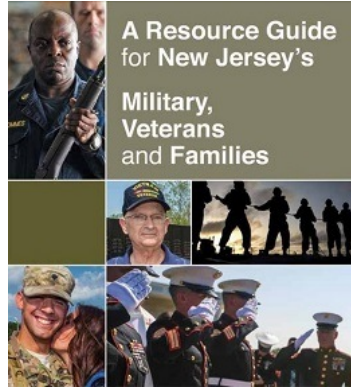


New Jersey State Archives

The [New Jersey State Archives](https://www.nj.gov/military/outreach/newsletters/20231220.html) has over 11,000 images in their online Military and Wartime collection, including over 1,000 pictures

collected by the New Jersey National Guard.

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 our [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

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