

# NJDMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 19, 2015



# MAKING THE CUT



*By Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley  
Photos by Tech. Sgt. Matt Hecht  
NJDMAVA Public Affairs*

## **Cover**

*Pvt. Marc Laspino from the New Jersey Army National Guard's 114th Infantry Regiment practices Honor Guard maneuvers at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, N.J., Feb. 12, 2015.*

# You need to know more than just how to fold the flag to join the New Jersey Army National Guard Honor Guard.

How much more? Enough to fill five very long days.

On Feb. 8, ten Soldiers graduated from the rigorous 40-hour program required to join the New Jersey Army National Guard Honor Guard, which provides a dignified military presence at the funerals of more than 4,000 Veterans a year.

Over the course of five days, the candidates marched thousands of times across the drill floor of the Lawrenceville armory, lifted, carried and placed a mock coffin hundreds of times and spent many excruciating minutes motionless except for the movements required to rack and re-rack the charging handle of their 9-pound M-14 rifles.

There were no complaints, even as the rifles grew heavier and beads of sweat began popping from the Soldiers' brows.

"I love what the Honor Guard represents, 'duty, honor,'" said Spc. Alexis Rosado, a 23-year-old jeweler from West Windsor. "It's an honor to be able to do this."

A position on the Honor Guard is perhaps the most visible job in the New Jersey Army National Guard.

"At a military funeral, we only get one chance to get it right," said Staff Sgt. John Alvarado, one of the Honor Guard's trainers. "We may be the only face of the military the family ever is going to see. If we mess up, it reflects poorly on all of us."

The newly-minted Honor Guard members join the organization at a critical juncture. The program was launched in 2005 and for many years drew much of its manpower from National Guard Soldiers who served with the unit as a full-time job. That changed in the past year as budgets across the U.S. Department of Defense began to constrict. Seventeen full-time positions turned into three. Requests for the Honor Guard's presence, however, made no such decline.



*Soldiers from the New Jersey National Guard's Honor Guard practice casket and funeral maneuvers at the Lawrenceville Armory, N.J., Feb. 12, 2015.*

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**STAFF SGT. JOHN ALVARADO  
HONOR GUARD INSTRUCTOR  
NEW JERSEY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

To keep pace with requests, the Honor Guard now leans heavily on a group of 200 traditional drilling Guard Soldiers who participate in funerals on an as needed basis. And they've been needed. The Honor Guard is only slightly behind pace to eclipse more than 4,000 funerals again this year.

Spc. Kerry Evans, the Honor Guard's full-time program manager, said Soldiers who must juggle jobs, families, schools and life in addition to additional military duties are the key to the program's future.

"This program will rise and fall on the shoulders of the traditional drilling Soldier," Evans said.

That's why the weeklong programs to induct new members are so important.

The week begins with "Zero Day," which includes a general overview about Honor Guard duties and the extra commitment it requires. Soldiers are already pre-screened to ensure they meet the Army's physical fitness and body composition requirement. Looking sloppy in the dress uniform is not an option.

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# RED TAIL ANGELS: THE STORY OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Prior to World War II, the situation for African-American aviators was even more grim than their counterparts in the other services.

**By Master. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 108th Wing Public Affairs  
Photos by Toni Frissell, Library of Congress collection**

The Army Air Corps had completely barred blacks from their ranks while the other services assigned blacks only the most menial of duties. The basis for this decision was an Army War College report called *The Use of Negro Manpower in War*, which stated that blacks were unfit for combat duty.

Civil rights organizations and the black press, combined with congressional legislation, successfully fought this position resulting in the formation of the 99th Pursuit Squadron based at Tuskegee Institute in June 1941.

History would know them as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The first class had 12 cadets and one student officer, Capt. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., who would later play a critical role in the 332nd Fighter Group.



**Tuskegee Airmen 1st Lt. Roscoe C. Brown, crew chief Marcellus G. Smith and Col. Benjamin O. Davis, load .50-caliber ammunition on a P-51 Mustang at Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.**

Class 42C earned their wings in March 1942 at the segregated Tuskegee Army Air Field becoming the nation's first black military pilots. Despite this, the unit did not receive deployment orders. After months of delays by the War Department, the 400-man 99th Fighter Squadron deployed to North Africa in April 1943. Eventually, the 99th became part of the 332nd Fighter Group, which



**Airmen of the 332nd, from left to right: Robert W. Williams, William H. Holloman, Ronald W. Reeves, Christopher W. Newman and Walter M. Downs at a briefing, Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.**

was comprised of the 100th, 301st and 302nd African-American Fighter Squadrons based in Italy. The 332nd moved from Montecorvino Air Base near Salerno and Capodichino Air Field to their final base at Ramitelli Air Field near Ancona, where, under Davis' command, flew missions over Sicily, the Mediterranean, North Africa and eventually Germany where they flew combat and bomber escort missions.

American bomber crews nicknamed the 332nd, the Red Tails or Red Tail Angels after the red tail markings on the vertical stabilizers of the unit's aircraft. The Luftwaffe called the Tuskegee Airmen, *Der Schwarze Vogelmenschen*, literally the Black Birdmen.

One of the 332nd's most famous missions occurred on March 24, 1945. Davis, now a lieutenant colonel, led the Group in an escort mission of 5th Air Wing B-17 bombers on a 1,600-mile mis-

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# Red Tail Angels: The story of the Tuskegee Airmen

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sion from Ramitelli, Italy, to attack the Daimler-Benz tank assembly plant near Berlin.

During the mission, the 332nd was supposed to be relieved by another fighter unit prior to arriving at the target, when the unit didn't show up, the 332nd stayed with the B-17s. During the mission, in addition to protecting the bombers, the 332nd shot down three Messerschmitt Me 262 jet fighters and provided Army Intelligence with valuable tactical information on the aircraft. As a result, the 332nd was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for the mission.

By war's end, the 332nd completed 1,578 combat missions, destroyed or damaged 400 enemy aircraft, sank an enemy destroyer and destroyed numerous enemy installations.

By 1945, 992 pilots had trained at Tuskegee; 335 would be deployed, 66 were killed in action and 32 were shot down and became prisoners of war. They received numerous awards, including 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses, several Silver Stars, eight



**Marcellus G. Smith, left, and Roscoe C. Brown, perform maintenance on a P-51 Mustang, Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.**

Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars, 744 Air Medals, the Croix de Guerre and the Red Star of Yugoslavia. The 99th received two Distinguished Unit Citations. Davis, who in 1936, was the first African American to

graduate from West Point Military Academy in 47 years, would later retire as an Air Force lieutenant general and the nation's second African American general officer.

The 332nd was disbanded in 1949 with the implementation of President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981, which ended racial discrimination in the military. The Airmen and aircraft were assigned to other units.

In 2005, Tuskegee Airmen Lt. Cols. Lee Archer and Robert Ashby, along with Master Sgt. James Sheppard and Tech. Sgt. George Watson, flew to Balad, Iraq, to speak to active duty Airmen serving with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. At the time of the visit, there were 100 Tuskegee Airmen still alive.

"This group represents the linkage between the greatest generation of Airmen and the latest generation of Airmen," said Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III, commander, Ninth Air Force and U.S. Central Command Air Forces.

## MAKING THE CUT

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The other requirements come slowly over the course of the week. Although every Soldier has a basic grasp on how to march, turn and salute, the Honor Guard takes it to a new level.

"For a new Soldier coming in, they think 'I know how to do a facing movement,'" Alvarado said. "Well, not like we do it."

The Soldiers learn how to execute facing movements while keeping their heels together, which makes the turn more fluid – and more difficult – especially in dress shoes on slippery grass.

Other movements, such as parade rest, are the reverse of the norm, with hands folded in front instead of behind the back.

But the biggest challenge involves moving gracefully, in unison, through a tight space with a coffin. The movements require silent commands executed after passage of a set number of seconds.

"Everything we do is attention to detail," Alvarado said.

One of the reasons the training to join the Honor Guard is so intense – aside from the fact Soldiers have a week to absorb all

the material from a manual as thick as a phone book – is that funeral details are both physically and emotionally draining.

It's not uncommon for an Honor Guard team to perform multiple burials on a duty day.

For that reason, Soldiers are counseled to only accept the duty on a day they're prepared to give it all they have.

"If Honor Guard can't be the most important thing you do that day, it's not something you should be doing that day," Evans said.

It sounds like a fair bargain to the Honor Guard's newest members.

Eleven years ago, Pvt. Marc Lospina's family buried his grandfather, a World War II veteran who meant the world to him. Lospina, 22, a college student from West Depford, said he fixated on the honor guard that day.

"They were so sharp, so dignified," Lospina said. "All I could think was 'Someday, I want to do that.'"

An encounter with an honor guard at a funeral for a family friend also planted the seed in Pfc. Chris Robinson's mind.

"It stuck with me. I saw how they connected they were to the family," Robinson said. "And I saw what it meant to the family that the military thought enough to send that honor guard."

For Sgt. First Class Luis Layme, joining the honor guard is simply a logical extension of what he's done for the better part of an 18-year career that's included four combat deployments.

"I'm a non-commissioned officer and it's my job to take care of Soldiers," Layme said. "In the honor guard, I'm still taking care of Soldiers. It may have been many years since they wore this uniform, but they're still Soldiers."

That's how Evans looks at it. He said that he's made a special effort to reach out to funeral directors to make sure they are aware that all Veterans are entitled to an honor guard. He's made a special push to ensure that word gets out to advocates for homeless veterans as well.

"The funeral is the last opportunity to thank a Veteran for his service," Evans said. "We shouldn't ever miss an opportunity to do that."

*New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs*

PO Box 340  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340

1-888-8NJ-VETS(8387) or [www.state.nj.us/military](http://www.state.nj.us/military)



Raymond L. Zawacki, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs (609-530-7062)  
Laura Branham, Executive Secretarial Assistant (609-530-7045)  
Chuck Robbins, Assistant to DCVA/Outreach Coordinator (609-530-6855)

Fax: 609-530-7191

**Veterans Healthcare Services (DVHS)**

<p><b>Brigadier General Steven Ferrari, Director</b> 609-530-6967 Donna Myers, Sec 609-530-6766 Ernie Razzano, Health Professions Recruiter 609-530-6767 Virginia Fiess, QA Coordinator 609-530-6979 Vacant, Admin Analyst 609-530-6940 Fax: 609-530-6970</p>	<p><b>Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home</b> Joseph Brandspiegel, CEO Jennifer Pajak, Sec 132 Evergreen Road, PO Box 3013 Edison, NJ 08818-3013 732-452-4102 Fax: 732-603-3016</p>	<p><b>Paramus Veterans Memorial Home</b> Dianne Tabron-Felder, CEO Diane Callaghan, Sec 1 Veterans Drive Paramus, NJ 07652 201-634-8525 Fax: 201-967-8658</p>	<p><b>Vineland Veterans Memorial Home</b> Boris Reissek, CEO Sharon Davis, Sec 524 North West Boulevard Vineland, NJ 08360-2895 856-405-4207 Fax: 856-696-6714</p>
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**Veterans Services (DVS)**

<p><b>Albert J. Bucchi, Director</b> 609-530-6962 Cheryl A. Henderson, Sec 609-530-6975 Fax: 609-530-7075</p>	<p><b>Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery</b> Iven Dumas, State Supt – 609-738-2424 Genia DiBella, Sec – 609-738-2404 Cyndi Dzurisin, Interment Office Supervisor, – 609-738-2407 Dennis Macomber, Honor Guard, – 609-758-7505 350 Provinceline Road, Wrightstown, NJ 08562 609-738-2400 Fax: 609-758-0169 <i>Maintenance/Cemeteries/Memorials</i> Joseph Arroyo &amp; Kenneth Smith Supervisor, 609-738-2408 Fax: 609-758-3490</p>	<p><b>Vietnam Veterans Memorial</b> 1 Memorial Lane, PO Box 648, Holmdel, NJ 07733 732-335-0033 Fax: 732-335-1107 <b>Korean Memorial</b> Boardwalk/Brighton Park, Atlantic City, NJ 08401 <b>War World II Memorial</b> W State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608</p>	<p><b>Veterans Haven South</b> Walter Nail, Supt – 609-561-4948 Vacant, Asst, Supt – 609-567-3715 301 Spring Garden Road, PO Box 80 Winslow, NJ 08095 609-561-0269 Fax: 609-567-5186</p>	<p><b>Veterans Haven North</b> Sean VanLew, Supt – 908-537-1960 Laura Blaine, Sec – 908-537-1963 200 Sanatorium Road, Suite 101 Glen Gardner, NJ 08826 908-537-1999 Fax: 908-537-1990</p>
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<p><b>State Approving Agency-GI Bill Programs</b> Charles Rowe, Bureau Chief – 609-530-6842 Marisol Meyer, Education Prog Asst – 609-530-6848 Lynn Yesalonia, State Admin – 609-530-6858 Joan Edwards, State Admin – 609-530-6948 Fax: 609-530-7196</p>	<p><b>Veterans Benefits Bureau</b> Patricia A. Richter, Bureau Chief – 609-530-6949 Elizabeth Schofield, Prin Staff Officer – 609-530-6954 Paul Kale, Staff Asst – 609-530-6826 Cynthia Barnes, Sec – 609-530-6868 Michele Johnson, Sec – 609-530-7035 Fax: 609-530-6970</p>	<p><b>Veterans Service Offices</b> Chris Kulkoski, VSO Training Officer – 609-530-7050 Joseph Bucco, State Supervisor – 609-530-6830 Christopher Wambach, State Supervisor – 609-530-6863 Joseph E. Nyzio, VSO – 609-530-6857 <b>VA Regional Office/Philadelphia</b> Vacant, VSO – 215-381-3033 5000 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144</p>
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<p><b>Atlantic City/Cape May</b> Edmond Famiglietti, VSO Vacant, Sec 1008 Absecon Boulevard, <b>Atlantic City</b> 08401-1999 – (Atlantic City Army) 609-441-3060/3061 Fax: 609-441-3899 (closed alternate Fridays)</p>	<p><b>Bergen/Passaic</b> Richard Mannes, VSO Titus Osagwu, Sec 125 State Street, Suite 109, <b>Hackensack</b> 07601-5435 201-996-8050/8051 Fax: 201-996-8009</p>	<p><b>Burlington</b> Charles Piscopo, VSO Bernadette Whitman, Sec 555 High Street, Suite 6A, <b>Mt. Holly</b> 08060 609-518-2273/2274 Fax: 609-518-2275</p>
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<p><b>Camden/Gloucester</b> Joseph Frost, VSO Diane Rosci, Sec 658 N Evergreen Avenue, <b>Woodbury</b> 08096 – (Woodbury Army) 856-853-4184/4185/4186 Fax: 856-384-3781 (closed alternate Fridays)</p>	<p><b>Essex/Union</b> Lorena Huggins, VSO Helen Banks, Sec 20 Washington Place, Room 431, <b>Newark</b> 07102-3174 973-297-3336 Fax: 973-642-0830</p>	<p><b>Hudson</b> Vacant, VSO Vacant, Sec 678 Montgomery Street, 2nd Floor, <b>Jersey City</b> 07306 – (Jersey City Army) 201-536-3401 Fax: 201-536-3404 (closed alternate Fridays)</p>
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<p><b>Mercer</b> William McDonnell, VSO Theresa Torneck, Sec 151 Eggerts Crossing Road, Room 136, <b>Lawrenceville</b> 08648 – (Lawrenceville Army) 609-671-6697/6696 Fax: 609-671-6698</p>	<p><b>Middlesex/Somerset</b> Joseph Battilo, VSO Vacant, Sec 1060 Hamilton Street, <b>Somerset</b> 08873 – (Somerset Army) 732-937-6347/6348 Fax: 732-937-6417 (closed alternate Fridays)</p>	<p><b>Monmouth</b> Robert Brown, VSO Rita Hyland, Sec 630 Bangs Avenue, Suite 320, <b>Asbury Park</b> 07712-6904 732-775-7009/7005 Fax: 732-775-3612</p>
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<p><b>Newark Liaison/VA Regional Office</b> Robert Maulano, VSO Michael Dorobis, Sec 20 Washington Place, <b>Newark</b> 07102-3174 973-297-3230 Fax: 973-648-2356</p>	<p><b>Ocean</b> Nicholas Petrozzino, VSO Iris Perez, Sec James J. Howard Outpatient Clinic 970 Route 70, <b>Brick</b> 08724-3550 732-840-3033/3034 Fax: 732-840-0399</p>	<p><b>Salem/Cumberland</b> Leigh R. Pottle, VSO Vacant, VSO Catherine Raniolo, Sec 524 Northwest Boulevard, <b>Vineland</b> 08360-2895 856-405-4388/4390/4389 Fax: 856-696-6499</p>
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NJ VETS LIST - October 2014

**E-mail your Highlights submissions to: [mark.olsen@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:mark.olsen@dmava.nj.gov) by close of business Wednesday**

**STRONG BONDS  
TWO EVENTS**

**When:** March 13, 2015 – March 15, 2015  
**What:** 7 Habits of Highly Effective Soldiers (Singles)  
**What:** Active Relationships (Couples)

**Where:** The Hotel ML  
915 Route 73  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

\*Childcare is not provided.

To find out more on Strong Bonds, contact SGT John Schwartz (609)324-7039 or visit [www.strongbonds.org](http://www.strongbonds.org) (ALL DEPENDENTS MUST BE REGISTERED IN DEERS)



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AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101 by the Public Affairs Office of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for all members of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, their families, the New Jersey veterans community, retirees and civilian employees. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the National Guard Bureau, Veterans Affairs or the State of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJDMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, NJDMAVA, PO Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340. E-mail to: [pao@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:pao@dmava.nj.gov)

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Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Writer, photographer  
Tech. Sgt. Matt Hecht – Photographer, graphic artist

## ENERGY CONSERVATION TIP OF THE WEEK

Reducing how much you eat  
can help reduce greenhouse  
gas emissions

### Did You Know...

The agricultural industry accounts for 14 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. That's more than what is produced by transportation - 13 percent, residential and commercial buildings - eight percent, and waste/wastewater three percent. By cutting back on unnecessary food consumption and allowing for portion control, you can improve your health as well as the environment.

Source: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/global.html>

For more information about energy and water conservation efforts, contact Christopher Moore, Energy Manager at [christopher.moore@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:christopher.moore@dmava.nj.gov)

## NJDMAVA VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

A DMAVA VSO will be present at each event  
to assist any veteran

March 14

VA Town Hall Meeting  
Lawrenceville National Guard Armory  
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Claims Clinic 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
151 Eggert Crossing Road, Lawrenceville, NJ  
08648

March 16

Newark Veterans Job Fair  
Rutgers University, Newark – Paul Robeson  
Campus Center, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
350 Martin Luther King Blvd., Newark, NJ 07104

March 19

Veteran Career Fair & Military Expo  
Rider College, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrence Township,  
NJ 08648



US FAMILY  
HEALTH PLAN



### Upcoming information sessions

DMAVA  
IASD Section  
101 Eggerts Crossing Road  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648  
Feb. 25: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
POC: Josephine Grey, (347) 501-2308

AAFES (storefront)  
Coast Guard Base  
Cape May Training Center  
Cape May, NJ 08204  
Feb. 27: 12 – 3 p.m.  
POC: Josephine Grey, (347) 501-2308

Monmouth County Library  
Eastern Branch  
1001 Route 35  
Shrewsbury, NJ 07702  
Feb. 24: 11am-2pm  
POC: Pam Kwiat, (646) 341-2545

Military & Family Support Center  
Lakehurst NAS, Highway 547  
Building 488 Walsh Road  
Lakehurst, NJ 08733  
Feb. 26: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
POC: Pam Kwiat, (646) 341-2545

McGuire Library  
2603 Tuskegee Airmen Ave  
McGuire AFB, NJ 08641  
Feb. 25: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
POC: Pam Kwiat, (646) 341-2545

Jersey City Armory  
678 Montgomery Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07306  
Feb. 26: 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.  
POC: Darrel Hutchinson  
(646) 354-0126

Army Community Service  
Building 119  
Dover NJ 07806  
Feb. 24: 1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
POC: Darrel Hutchinson  
(646) 354-0126

Newark Armory  
120 Roseville Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07107  
Feb. 25: 12 – 5 p.m.  
POC: Darrel Hutchinson  
(646) 354-0126

Camden County Veterans Affairs  
3 Collier Dr. Lakeland Complex  
Blackwood, NJ 08012  
Feb. 23, Mar. 9, 23  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. (hourly)  
POC: Wil Acosta, (646) 300-1312