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DMA Military Newsletter

February 4, 2026



Military
NJ Department of
Military Affairs

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Commissioner's Corner



Investing in Readiness, Strengthening Partnerships

As we close out our first month as the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs, the last few weeks underscored a simple truth about our organization: readiness is built through investment in our people, partners, and infrastructure.

In late January, we marked an important milestone with the ribbon cutting of the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction – Civil Support Team Ready Building at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Spearheaded by Colonel Vivienne McNamara and DMA's Construction and Facilities Management team, this facility provides modern infrastructure that enhances our ability to respond rapidly to complex environments. More importantly, it gives our Soldiers and Airmen the training and coordination space necessary to operate seamlessly with partners when New Jersey needs us most.

On January 21st, we proudly welcomed home Airmen of the 177th Fighter Wing following their deployment supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Their work strengthened regional stability and reinforced cooperation with allies across a critical region. Their professionalism overseas reflects the same dedication they bring when supporting missions here at home

At the same time, our engagement with international partners continued through our State Partnership Program. In late January, training with our partners from the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Cyprus, focused on fires coordination and cyber operations, strengthened readiness while building relationships in support of defense security goals.

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit Soldiers from the 328th Military Police Company deployed to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian. Working alongside multinational partners, our Soldiers help maintain regional stability while strengthening relationships that support long-term security cooperation.

These efforts share a common purpose: ensuring our organization remains prepared, modern, and capable wherever we are called to serve.

Whether responding to emergencies in New Jersey, supporting federal missions abroad, or training alongside partners, our people continue to demonstrate the professionalism and discipline that define the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs.

As always, thank you for staying connected to DMA.

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

Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays
Adjutant General & Commissioner



Events

Community Calendar

New events are added to the calendar on a daily basis so please bookmark and check back often.

[View Full Calendar](#)

Black History Month

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
RE WASHINGTON
EXECUTIVE DEPT.
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

7 February 1948

1948 FEB 9 AM 9 13

Honorable Alfred E. Driscoll
Governor of New Jersey
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Governor Driscoll:

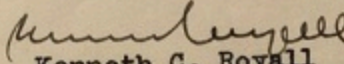
On January 8 you addressed to me a telegraphic inquiry concerning the utilization of Negro manpower in the militia of New Jersey. I have had the matter carefully reviewed by the military Staff of this Department and have myself given it full consideration.

In accordance with a report of competent and experienced officers, the War Department on 27 April 1946 issued regulations which, among other things, required (subject to certain exceptions) that when Negroes are employed in Army units below the battalion, they will be organized into separate units.

This provision was considered to be in the interest of national defense, and both the Staff and I feel that this is still the case. Therefore, these regulations will be continued in force for the Regular Army and, subject to the exception noted below, will also be effective for the Federally recognized civilian components of the Army.

I have noted the fact that the people of New Jersey by direct majority vote have provided in their Constitution that "no person shall . . . be segregated in the militia because of race, color . . ." While the authority to determine all questions relating to the Federally recognized National Guard must necessarily be exercised by the Department of the Army, yet I recognize the importance to a sovereign state of a constitutional provision such as yours, and I have determined that for the present, Army militia units of New Jersey, if otherwise qualified, will not be denied Federal recognition on the ground of non-segregation.

Sincerely yours,


Kenneth C. Royall
Secretary of the Army

The End of Segregation in NJ

Letter from Kenneth C. Royall, Secretary of the Army, sent to New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll on February 7, 1948, authorizing racially mixed units in the New Jersey Army National Guard. This

made the New Jersey National Guard the first federally recognized military component to be integrated.

Announcement



BG Arthur C. Roscoe

The Adjutant General announced that, effective February 1, 2026, Brigadier General Arthur C. Roscoe assumed responsibility as the Assistant Adjutant General - Army and the Deputy Adjutant General of New Jersey.

BG Roscoe is the principal advisor to The Adjutant General on all matters concerning military readiness, mobilizations, homeland security, defense support to civil authorities, human resources, logistics, training, and financial management.

DMA Month in Review Video



NJ National Guard



177th Fighter Wing

On January 21, 2026, Airmen from the [177th Fighter Wing](#), New Jersey Air National Guard, returned home from a three-month deployment overseas.

The 177th Fighter Wing's F-16 deployment to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, projected combat-ready airpower to deter aggression and ensure stability, affirming the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

“The deployment was a great success,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Eric Emerson, 119th Fighter Squadron commander. “Maintenance did a great job keeping the jets mission capable. We were doing reconfigures for higher headquarters’ missions multiple times and they crushed it. It was awesome.”

Welcome back Jersey Devils!



3-112th Field Artillery

Soldiers with A Battery, 3-112th Field Artillery, New Jersey Army National Guard, fire M119A3 howitzers for the 19-gun salute during the inauguration ceremony for New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill at Military Park in Newark, NJ on January 20, 2026.

In addition, Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard Honor Guard presented the colors at the beginning of the ceremony and UH-60M Black Hawks with 1st Battalion, 150th Assault Helicopter Regiment, performed a flyover at the conclusion of the inauguration.

[View Images](#)



21st WMD-CST

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team Ready Building at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ on January 21, 2026.

The facility includes a temperature-controlled environment and continuous electrical power source for vehicles that contain hypersensitive instruments, as well as storage requirements for temperature sensitive personal protective and decontamination equipment supplies sufficient to sustain a 72-hour response to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.

The \$6.5 million, 12,400-square-foot state-of-the-art facility will support the Soldiers and Airmen of the 21st WMD-CST and their 24/7/365 mission.

[View Images](#)



State Partnership Program

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry Regiment, 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, trained Albanian Armed Forces' soldiers on the Call For Fire Tactical Combat Trainer at the Joint Training and Training Development Center at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ on January 29, 2026.

The [State Partnership Program](#) is administered by the National Guard Bureau that links a state's National Guard with the armed forces of a partner country in order to build long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with U.S. partners around the world.

The New Jersey National Guard's partnership with the Republic of Albania, began informally in 1995 and officially became part of the National Guard State Partnership Program on September 21, 2001. It is one of the oldest SPP relationships in the nation.

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Join Our Team

Service to Community and Country

100% Free College Tuition

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Servicemember Spotlight



SGT Denise Gonzalez

Sergeant Denise Gonzalez joined the military in June 2018 after graduating from Ridgefield Park Jr./Sr. High School. Looking to continue her education, she joined the New Jersey Army National Guard for the college tuition benefits, which she used to obtain her degree in business administration from William Paterson University.

Currently, SGT Gonzalez is on her second deployment to the U.S. CENTCOM area of responsibility assigned to Task Force Integrator at Erbil, Iraq in support of [Operation Inherent Resolve](#). She previously deployed in 2020-2021 with the [42nd Regional Support Group](#), also in support of OIR at Al Asad Air Base.

She is the S1 section non-commissioned officer in charge and is responsible for the supervision of the HR staff, processing evaluations and awards, and maintaining accurate records and accountability of personnel.

SGT Gonzalez says the best part of her job is interacting with her team and how she has learned to be a leader.



SGT Felipe DeSouza

Sergeant Felipe DeSouza immigrated to the United States in 2015 and has been building his life here ever since. He is originally from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and currently lives in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, where he proudly serves as a volunteer firefighter.

He joined the New Jersey Army National Guard in July 2019, initially enlisting as an 88M, motor transport operator and later reclassified to 25B, information technology specialist. “I joined the military as a way to show appreciation to this country for the opportunities it gave me as an immigrant,” said DeSouza, “that decision has shaped my professional and personal growth.”

DeSouza is currently deployed to the U.S. CENTCOM area of responsibility in support of [Operation Inherent Resolve](#). As the facility management noncommissioned officer in charge of Task Force Integrator, DeSouza is responsible for ensuring that work orders are executed properly and completed. In addition, he is responsible for ensuring that visitors’ access request is also processed timely and accurately.

“The best part of my job is getting to interact with people from all over the world, learning from different cultures and perspectives,” said DeSouza, “during this deployment, I’ve learned how to multitask efficiently, take on responsibilities I had never worked with before, and apply those skills to automation and operational improvements.”

Having already completed college at Colegio Cotemig in Brazil, DeSouza is now pursuing a computer information systems degree from Thomas Edison State University. His long-term goal is to make a career out of the military and possibly become a warrant officer in the future.



Lieutenant Colonel Promotions

Lieutenant Colonels Bethanie Schultz and Carl Wydrzynski, a married couple serving in the New Jersey Army National Guard, shared a rare milestone as they were promoted to lieutenant colonel during a joint ceremony recognizing their leadership and dedication to service.

Surrounded by family, friends, and fellow Soldiers, the moment reflected years of commitment to both the mission and each other, reinforced by the pride of a formation that values its people and its purpose.

Their simultaneous pinning highlighted the New Jersey National Guard's lasting commitment to being more than a team; it is a family that stands together through deployments, professional growth, and life's most important moments.

Advancing together, Schultz and Wydrzynski continue their service as field grade officers, carrying forward a shared legacy of leadership shaped by teamwork, sacrifice, and the strength of a community that has stood beside them throughout their careers.

[View Images](#)

DMA Departments



NJ Youth Challenge Academy

NJ Youth Challenge Academy Class 61 Candidates officially became Cadets during their Acclimation Graduation on February 2, 2026.

The first two weeks are what most Cadets would say is the hardest part of the 22-week [NJ Youth Challenge Academy](#).

Congratulations on reaching this moment of excellence!



NEW JERSEY
YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

 **YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY**

Now accepting applications for Class 62 - July 2026!

APPLY NOW!

TUITION FREE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

-  njyca.gov/admissions
-  rpm@dma.nj.gov
-  (732) 974-6500



REGISTRATION OPEN JANUARY 11 - MARCH 22

NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD

YOUTH CAMP 2026



Camp Dates: July 5th - July 11th

A one week sleep away camp for NJ military youth. Daily activities include: Morning PT, Beach, Archery, Arts & Crafts, Sports & Night Activities.

- Open to ALL National Guard Youth ages 9+
- Counselors 16+ and Staff 18+
- Open until Mar 22nd or until full, acceptances sent by Mar 31st
- \$275/camper until Jan. 31st, or \$300 after that



Use the QR code to find ALL registrations and the FAQ page

COORDINATORS

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raymond.f.lapoint2.ctr@army.mil





NJ MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE

* /njarngfac



NJNG Child & Youth Program

* /njngcyp

Employee Spotlight



U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. (Ret.) Mark Olsen

U.S. Air Force retired Master Sgt. Mark Olsen joined the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs (formerly DMAVA) in March 1999.

He brings decades of military experience and a commitment to documenting the New Jersey National Guard's mission.

Olsen's military career began in 1982 when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. He served as a public affairs officer with Air Force Logistics Command for four years at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

After an 11-year break, Olsen joined the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, as a public affairs noncommissioned officer in 1997.

In 2012, he was assigned to the 108th Wing public affairs' office. That same year in November, he was recognized as the Journalist of the Month by the Defense Video & Imagery System for his coverage of the New Jersey National Guard's response to Hurricane Sandy.

In 2017, Olsen transferred to the 514th Air Mobility Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, where he continued supporting mission

readiness through visual storytelling capturing moments through a lens. While he was with the 514th, he wrote a Profile in Leadership, one of 16 featured in the Pentagon, highlighting Air Force Reserve Command's contribution to the Air Force mission.

He retired on his 60th birthday in 2018. During his more than 25 years of service, Olsen served in the active-duty Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve.

Olsen continues his service with the Department of Military Affairs because of his strong belief in the importance of preserving military history and amplifying the stories of service members whose work often goes unseen.

His dedication reflects the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs' commitment to service, excellence, and readiness. For Olsen, sharing the story of New Jersey's Soldiers and Airmen is more than a job; it's a calling that connects him to something greater than himself.

State Partners



NJ State Agencies

- [NJ Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicides among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families](#)
- [The New Jersey's Governor "We Value Our Veterans" Awards](#)
- [Bringing Veterans Home](#)
- [Vote For Valor](#)
- [Career Services for Veterans](#)
- [Tax Resources for Military/Veterans](#)
- [Educator Certification for Military Spouses and Veterans](#)
- [Civil Service Preference for Veterans](#)
- [NJ National Guard Hunting / Fishing Licenses](#)
- [NJ Special Hawker and Peddlers License](#)
- [Veterans Designation for Drivers License](#)
- [Military CDL Skills Waiver Program](#)
- [Disabled Veteran / Purple Heart Recipient Placards](#)
- [Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing Licenses](#)
- [Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business](#)

- [Division of Consumer Affairs Military Outreach & Support](#)
- [Professional & Occupational Licenses for Veterans and Spouses](#)
- [Military and Overseas Voting](#)
- [Veterans & Spouses Entering the Educator Workforce](#)
- [Journey Through Jersey](#)

Federal Partners



The image features a purple and pink geometric overlay on the left side. The Tutor.com logo is in a dark purple circle, with the URL TUTOR.COM/MILITARY below it. The background is a blurred classroom scene with a teacher and students raising their hands.

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In The News



Lawmakers look to codify NJ veteran homelessness initiative

Jim Vasil | PIX11 News | February 2, 2026

UNION, N.J. (PIX11) — Once an Army combat medic, Frank “Doc” Schupp does all he can for New Jersey’s veterans.

Years ago, it was he who needed the help, while homeless and living with PTSD.

“Life was scary,” said Schupp. “You never knew what was going to happen next.”

For an entire year, he lived what he describes as couch surfing.

“It’s confusing,” said Schupp. “You’re not sure what programs are going to be helping you out. Sometimes you reach out to some programs, and they won’t reach back. Then you’ll have some programs that will try their best, but they just don’t have the ability to be able to help.”

Today, as part of New Jersey Veterans Network, he helps dozens of other vets a month who've been in his shoes. Like other vets, he's hoping to see one state program continue its mission to end veteran homelessness.

"It will be a lot easier for veterans to come through and say, 'hey, this is a thing, I need help, please help me,'" said Schupp.

An initiative was launched by the Murphy administration in 2024 called [Bringing Veterans Home](#).

Its purpose is create rapid access to housing with the goal of effectively ending veteran homelessness.

[Read and Watch Full Story](#)



Carrier John F. Kennedy Gets Underway for First Time Ahead of Builder's Trials

Mallory Shelbourne | USNI News | January 28, 2026

The future USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN-79), the Navy's second Ford-class aircraft carrier, went to sea for the first time on Wednesday.

John F. Kennedy left Newport News, Va., for builder's trials.

“*John F. Kennedy* (CVN-79) departed HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division today to undergo builder's sea trials,” HII spokesman Todd Corillo told USNI News in a statement. “These trials will test important ship systems and components at sea for the first time.”

Builder's trials happen after a vessel finishes construction, but before the shipbuilder delivers it to the Navy. The trials allow the company to test the ship and its systems before delivery.

JFK is set to deliver to the Navy in March 2027 after facing numerous delays over the years while under construction at HII's Newport News Shipbuilding.

[Read Full Story](#)

History



Master Sergeant Fred William Zabitosky

February 8, 1862

The Ninth New Jersey Infantry became the first New Jersey unit engaged in a full scale battle in the Civil War. At Roanoke Island, North Carolina, the regiment charged through a swamp, gaining the nickname "Jersey Muskrats." The Muskrats lost nine men killed and twenty-five wounded in the fight. Among the dead was Captain Joseph Henry, the first New Jersey officer killed in action in the Civil War.

February 8, 1840

Cornelia Hancock, known as the "Florence Nightingale of America," was born at Hancock's Bridge. In 1863, Hancock traveled to

February 14, 1934

Charles F. Hopkins, the last surviving New Jersey Civil War Medal of Honor recipient, died in Boonton. Hopkins was awarded the medal for carrying a wounded comrade off the battlefield at Gaines Mill, Virginia in 1862. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Boonton.

February 19, 1945

Marine Sergeant John Basilone of Raritan, awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism on Guadalcanal in 1942, personally destroyed a Japanese strong point on Iwo Jima, using hand grenades and other explosives. Shortly afterward, while guiding a tank out

Gettysburg in the aftermath of the battle as a volunteer nurse and served through the remainder of the Civil War. After the war she taught freed slaves at Mount Pleasant, South Carolina and served as a pioneering social worker in Philadelphia. Hancock lived a long, fruitful and socially useful life before dying in Atlantic City on December 31, 1927. Her wartime letters were published in book form and are an important Civil War source.

February 12, 1948

Under orders from Governor Alfred E. Driscoll, the New Jersey adjutant general's office published General Order No. 4, specifying that "no qualified person shall be denied any military rights, nor be discriminated against in exercise of any military rights, nor be segregated in the militia because of religious principles, race, color, ancestry or national origin," officially desegregating the state's National Guard, despite opposition from the United States Department of War. New Jersey was the first state to desegregate its National Guard.

of harm's way, he was killed in action. Basilone was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, the Marine Corps' second highest decoration. He was inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2011.

February 19, 1968

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Fred Zabitosky of Trenton, although wounded himself, rescued a pilot whose helicopter had crashed and who was pinned down under heavy fire on a mission in Laos. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

February 20, 1864

A number of African-American New Jerseyans fought in the ranks of the Eighth United States Colored Infantry regiment at the battle of Olustee, Florida. Jerseymen killed at Olustee included Charles Anin, Jacob Hall, Henry Harris, Levi Scruby, Joseph Thompson, William H. Trimble, George Willett and Benjamin Wooley. Israel Cox of Trenton and John W. Adams of Salem County were badly wounded. Cox died in the hospital and Adams was finally discharged in November, 1865.



National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

Take a look at two of the proposed museum logo designs versus the final product we have today. Visit the museum website at njmilitiamuseum.gov.



Paris Peace Accords Signed

On January 27, 1973, the “Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam,” otherwise known the Paris Peace Accords, is signed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the

Republic of Vietnam, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (Viet Cong), and the United States.

Among other stipulations, the agreement established a ceasefire, a 60-day period for withdrawal of all American and other foreign troops, and the return of U.S. civilian and military personnel held prisoner by Communist forces. The accords officially end direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.

The next day, President Nixon uses an executive order to end the draft and inaugurate an all-volunteer military.

DMA Throwback



Super Bowl XLVIII

On Super Bowl Sunday in 2014, the Denver Broncos and the Seattle Seahawks had one thing on their minds: winning the NFL Championship.

At key locations across the state, New Jersey National Guardsmen stood ready with something else on their mind: the safety and security of the more than 90,000 people at MetLife Stadium, there to watch Super Bowl XLVIII.

Resources





DMA Careers



We Are Hiring!

At the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs we take our work in support of Servicemembers and their families very seriously. The Department provides valuable services and can offer rewarding career opportunities to members of the public.

In addition, we have job openings for members of our military to serve in AGR and Federal Technician roles.

Subscribe to the [MilVets 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, please visit our website at military.nj.gov to get contact information.

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