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December 24, 2024



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner

As I write this, the overseas service of the New Jersey National Guard continues. I ask that our readers continue to remember our neighbors deployed worldwide, especially the Soldiers of Detachment 2, Charlie Company, 1-171st General Support Aviation Battalion who are stationed in Kosovo performing their core mission of providing MEDEVAC support.

As we find ourselves in the holiday season, whether for those currently in harm's way or those here at home, let us give thanks for Garden State Service Members, Veterans, and their families. Those who serve, those who have served, and the people who love them provide me with a sense of purpose and motivation.

From the Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians that enable our success each day to you and yours, best wishes for a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

As always, thank you for staying connected to DMAVA.

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

Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays
Adjutant General & Commissioner



Featured Event

Free
Events



Trenton's Revolutionary History Comes to Life

PATRIOTS WEEK

DECEMBER 26TH - 31ST



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Events

DMAVA Calendar

DMAVA is sponsoring or will participate in the events below. A DMAVA Veterans Service Officer will be present at many of these events. Please check details to confirm.

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

Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

Spotlight



Volunteers lay wreaths at State Veterans Cemetery

More than 400 volunteers, including New Jersey Wing, Civil Air Patrol Cadets; Lakewood High School Army Junior ROTC cadets, along with Boy and Girl Scouts placed 3,000 wreaths on gravestones during a Wreaths Across America Ceremony at the [Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#) at Wrightstown, NJ on December 14, 2024.

Civil Air Patrol cadets from the Maj. Thomas B. McGuire Jr., Twin Pine, Allentown, and the Jimmy Stewart Composite Squadrons participated in the ceremony. The wreath laying was part of the 4,200 nationwide Wreaths Across America Day ceremonies.

[View Images](#)



Brig. Gen. Mays speaks at Wreaths Across America ceremony

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Yvonne L. Mays, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, attended the Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum, Mays Landing, NJ on December 14, 2024.

More than 200 volunteers, including members of Veterans organizations; Atlantic County Institute of Technology Air Force Junior ROTC cadets; Civil Air Patrol Cadets, along with Boy and Girl Scouts placed more than 2,000 wreaths on gravestones during a Wreaths Across America ceremony, part of the 4,200 nationwide Wreaths Across America Day ceremonies.

[View Images](#)

NJ National Guard



44th IBCT Soldiers Return Home

Soldiers with the [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#), New Jersey Army National Guard, arrived home in time for the holidays through Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ.

New Jersey National Guard leadership, family and friends greeted the troops. They were among the many waves that returned home of the 1,500 44th IBCT Soldiers who deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

This is the largest deployment of New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers since 2008. Welcome home, Jersey Blues!

[View Images](#)



119th Fighter Squadron

On December 15, 2024, a four-ship F-16C delta formation flown by the 119th Fighter Squadron of the [177th Fighter Wing](#), New Jersey Air National Guard, performed a flyover during the national anthem at Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, prior to the football game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

[View Images](#)



254th RTI

Soldiers of the [254th Regional Training Institute](#) brought pizzas and donation items to the Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park, December 8, 2024.

Sixty Veteran residents at Menlo Park dined with the Soldiers, told stories, and shared the joy of the season. Thank you to our servicemembers for taking time with our treasured Veterans!

Join Our Team

**100% Free College Tuition
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DMAVA Veterans Services



NJ Service Medals

The State of New Jersey awards medals to honorably discharged Veterans of the state who served in various conflicts and combat theaters.

State medals include the Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, POW/MIA Medal, Desert Storm Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Medal.

[Learn More](#)



Trején Strickland, Burlington County VSO

Trején Strickland is the DMAVA Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for Burlington County.

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

Unite  Veterans

Get Connected to Resources & Services

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has partnered with Unite Us to connect individuals and families

to a wide variety of services and resources.

Unite Us is a coordinated care referral network of health and social service providers. Unite Us can connect our New Jersey military and veteran community to resources to obtain benefits, food assistance, housing, education, transportation, behavioral health services, peer support and more.

[Learn More & Request Assistance](#)

Veteran Service Providers

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

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

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SUPPORT IS PEER TO PEER



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NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline
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vbb@dmava.nj.gov

Veterans Outreach Schedule

Veterans Service Offices

DMAVA Departments



New Jersey Youth ChalleNGe Academy Class 58 marks program's 30th Anniversary

DMAVA Public Affairs Office | December 17, 2024

Lawrenceville, N.J. - "DEEDS, NOT WORDS!"

Forty cadets graduated [New Jersey Youth ChalleNGe Academy](#) in a ceremony at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, December 16, 2024. They join a proud lineage of more than 4,500 graduates in the 30 years since the program's inception in 1994.

ChalleNGe is a leadership academy for youth that helps them become responsible and productive citizens of their communities, state and country. The academy provides unique transformational experiences through a highly disciplined 22-week residential program that integrates a quasi-military training environment, innovative academic offerings, and opportunities to further develop

their physical, social, and intellectual abilities. In partnership with a mentor, they will receive continued guidance and support during their one-year post residential phase immediately following graduation.

[Full News Feature](#) | [View Images](#) | [30th Anniversary Video](#)



DMAVA Holds Town Hall

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Yvonne L. Mays, 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 19, 2024.

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

[View Images](#)



2024 JFHQ Holiday Hop

The 2024 Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) Holiday Hop raised \$4,200 in support of New Jersey National Guard Family Readiness/Child and Youth Programs.

Co-Chair's Mr. Raymond Rizzo JFHQ-Army and Mrs. Connie Cisek JFHQ-Air along with numerous Committee Members worked diligently to raise this year's donation.

(Pictured L-to-R) Mr. Mic Greaves - HRO, Mr. Raymond LaPoint - Child & Youth Programs & Mrs. Connie Cisek JFHQ-Air.



Winter Wonderland 2024

The [New Jersey National Guard Family Programs](#) and Child & Youth Program held their Winter Wonderland 2024 celebration at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, NJ on December 13, 2024.

Families had a night out with fun, crafts and wintertime surprises.

[View Images](#)



Operation Merry & Bright 2024

The [New Jersey National Guard Family Programs](#) conducted its second annual "Operation Merry and Bright" in December providing over 500 gifts for the dependent children of New Jersey Army and Air National Guard servicemembers.

Families provided children's names, gender and age and donating organizations would then purchase the individual gifts. The gifts were then sorted at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, NJ and distributed to the Family Assistance Center closest to the Soldier/Airman's home where families would pick-up prior to the Holidays.

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NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

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for Class 59 - January 2025.

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njyca.org/admissions



rpm@dmava.nj.gov



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NJ National Guard Family Programs

December 2024

Newsletter and More



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 31, 2024.

This rotation features the storied flag of the Second New Jersey Infantry Regiment. At the 1862 Battle of Gaines' Mill, Corporal James Marshall draped this very flag around his body to protect it from the enemy while fighting off the numerically-superior force that threatened to surround him.

Despite his efforts, the Confederates captured the flag and displayed it in Richmond as a war relic. After the war, New Jersey Adjutant General William S. Stryker learned of the flag and coordinated its return to the state.

[Learn More](#)



NJ State Agencies

- [Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicides among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families](#)

- The New Jersey's Governor "We Value Our Veterans" Awards
- Vote For Valor
- Career Services for Veterans
- Tax Resources for Military/Veterans
- Educator Certification for Military Spouses and Veterans
- Civil Service Preference for Veterans
- NJ National Guard Hunting / Fishing Licenses
- NJ Special Hawker and Peddlers License
- Veterans Designation for Drivers License
- Military CDL Skills Waiver Program
- Disabled Veteran / Purple Heart Recipient Placards
- Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing Licenses
- Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business
- Division of Consumer Affairs Military Outreach & Support
- Professional & Occupational Licenses for Veterans and Spouses
- Military and Overseas Voting
- Troops to Teachers
- Journey Through Jersey

Federal Partners

The logo for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, consisting of the letters "VA" in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a dark blue background.

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA lowers life insurance premiums for more than 3 million Veterans, service members, and spouses

VA News | December 12, 2024

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that more than 3 million Veterans, service members, and spouses who receive life insurance from VA's programs will receive a discount on premiums starting in the spring of 2025.

These decreased premiums apply to those insured under Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) — and to those who enroll in those programs in the future.

[Read Full Release](#)

2025 VA Disability Increase

VA has released the new disability compensation payment rates for 2025. Learn how much increase Veterans can expect.

[Watch Video](#)



padlet

JB MDL Virtual Message Board



theSITREP Podcast

By: Department of Veterans Affairs
Podcast



VIETNAM



GULF WAR



POST - 9/11

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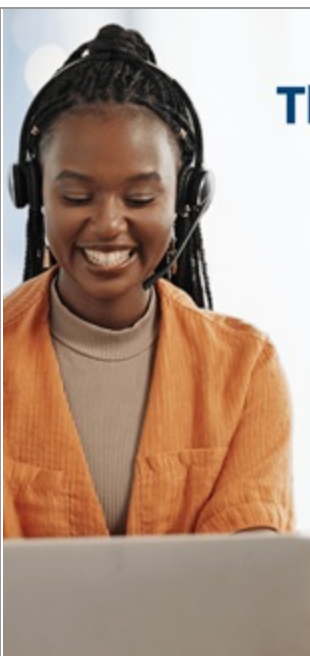


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Have questions?

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



The Women Veterans Call Center is Your Guide to VA

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

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

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Featured Links

- [National Parks Pass](#)
- [VALife Insurance](#)
- [VA Urgent Care Services](#)
- [Accessing Records from the National Archives or NPRC](#)
- [PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#)
- [How to Check Your PACT Act Claim Status](#)
- [Download VA Benefit Letters](#)
- [Podcasts on Veterans' Issues](#)
- [VA Health and Benefits Mobile App](#)
- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
- [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#)
- [Million Veteran Program](#)
- [#VetResources](#)
- [VA Resource Navigator](#)

Community Spotlight



Saint Joseph's University's Detachment 750 AFROTC Cadet Wing

Recently, students of Saint Joseph's University's Detachment 750 AFROTC Cadet Wing visited the [177th Fighter Wing](#).

The group first received a mission briefing from the 119th Fighter Squadron commander, before heading to the main hangar to view an F-16C Fighting Falcon static display.

They also had the opportunity to tour the base hush house, where jet engines are tested. The tour concluded with Aircrew Flight Equipment demonstrating the use-cases of an ejection seat, a flight suit and helmet.

Thanks, cadets. It was a pleasure to have you visit!



Essex County Holiday Food Distribution

The [New Jersey Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion](#) participated in the annual Essex County Holiday Food Distribution, presented by Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo Jr and RWJBarnabas Health on December 19, 2024.

In The News



County College of Morris Opens Veterans Resource Center

morriscountynj.gov | December 10, 2024

The County College of Morris (CCM) celebrated the grand opening of its Veterans Resource Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, Dec. 6, drawing veterans, students, and local dignitaries from around the county in support of a reconstructed area of Sheffield Hall that will assist veterans and their families both on campus and in the broader community.

The Veterans Resource Center on campus was designed to provide a dedicated space for veterans to access U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits, academic and career advice and counseling services. The center will also connect veterans to county, state, and federal resources available directly on campus.

[Read Full Article](#)



'We're like rock stars': Point Pleasant Battle of the Bulge veteran meets Belgian king

Jerry Carino | Asbury Park Press | December 17, 2024

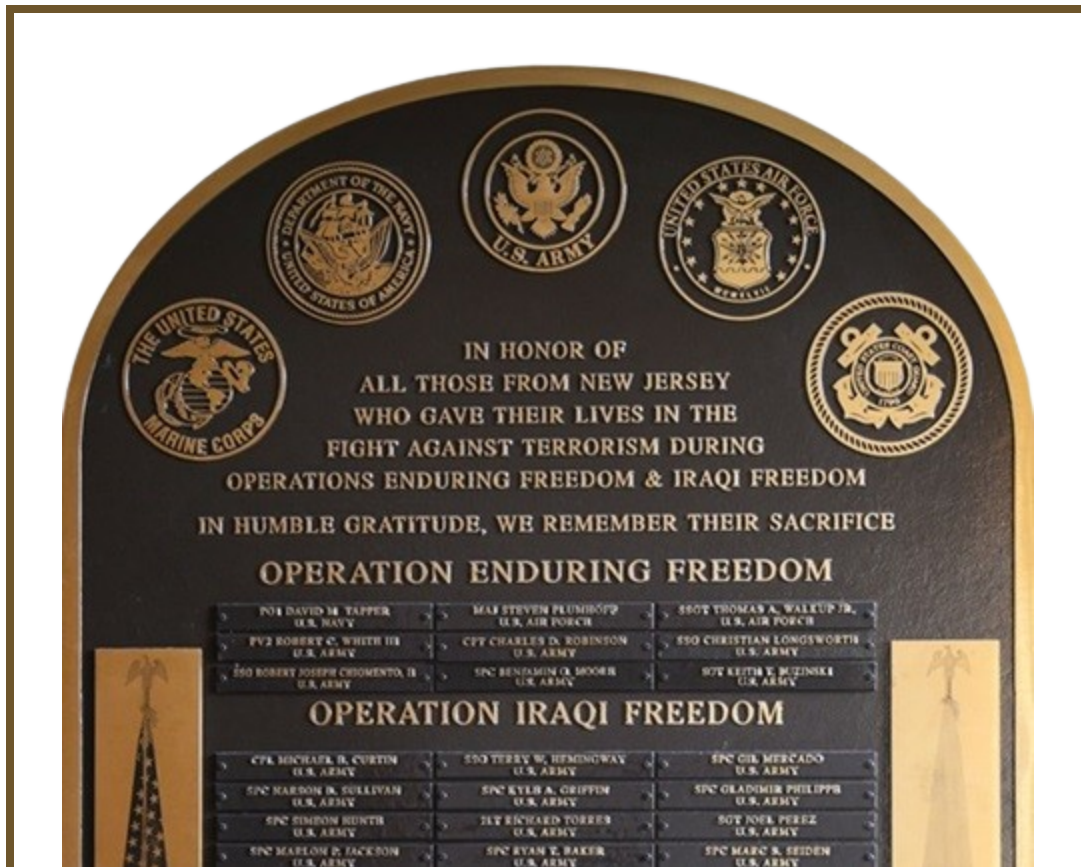
In the spring of 1944, Fred Nungesser graduated from St. Michael's High School in Union City. A little more than six months later he was fighting the Nazis, subfreezing temperatures and long odds during the Battle of the Bulge.

The largest and bloodiest battle fought by the U.S. in World War II began 80 years ago this week, and for the first time since then, Nungesser returned to the scene in Belgium.

The 99-year-old Point Pleasant resident was greeted, quite literally, like royalty. King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium hosted him and three other American veterans of the battle in a private meeting at the royal palace upon their arrival. This was right after a welcoming ceremony at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

[Read Full Article](#)

Never Forget



New Jersey Fallen Heroes Memorial

In Honor of all those from New Jersey who gave their lives in the fight against terrorism during Operation Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom.

In humble gratitude, we remember their sacrifice.

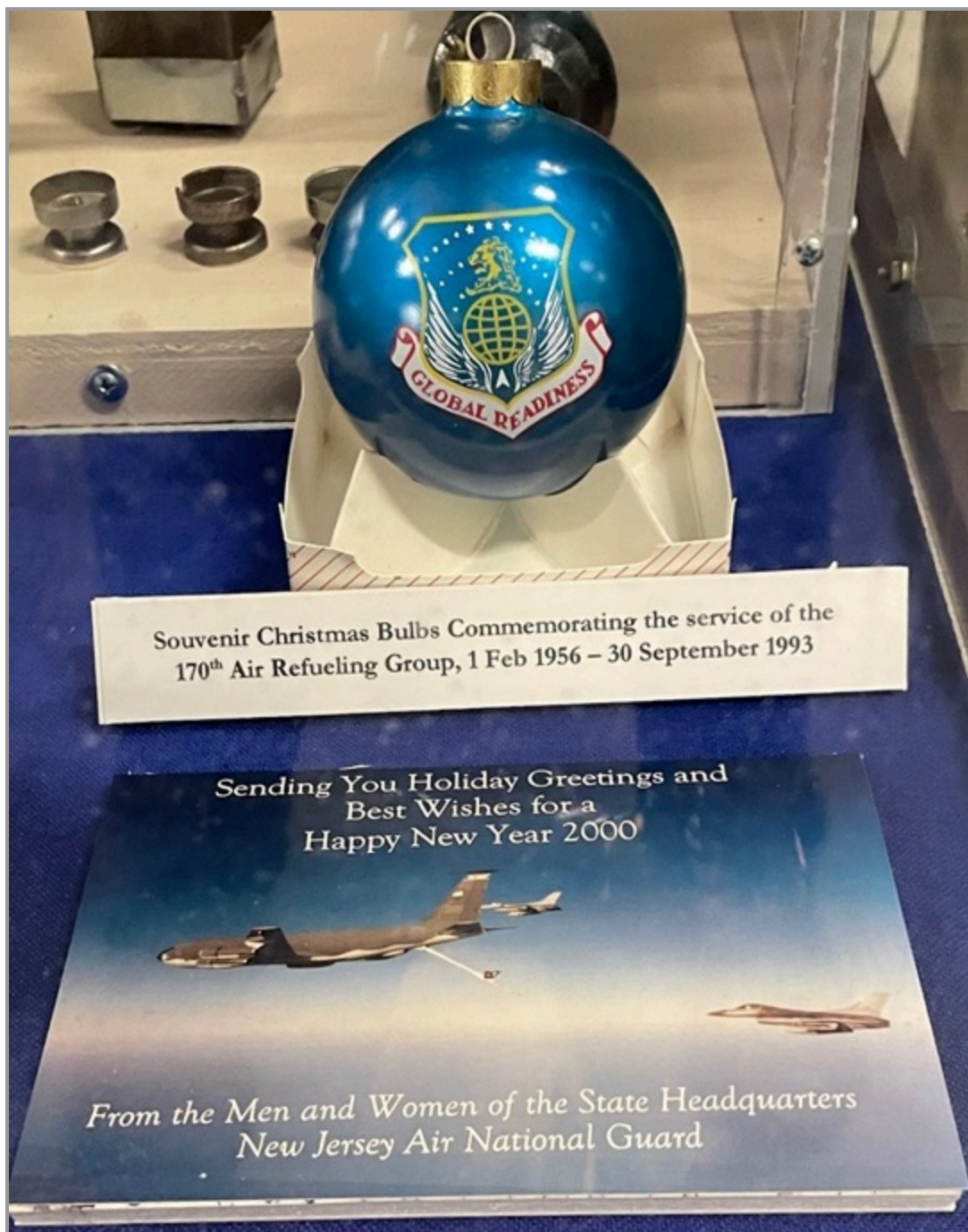
Memorial Inscription

"But on the battlefield their feet stood fast, and in an instant at the height of their fortune, they passed away from the scene, not of their fear, but of their glory."

~ Pericles

NJ Fallen Heroes Memorial

History



Artifacts displayed at the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey.

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

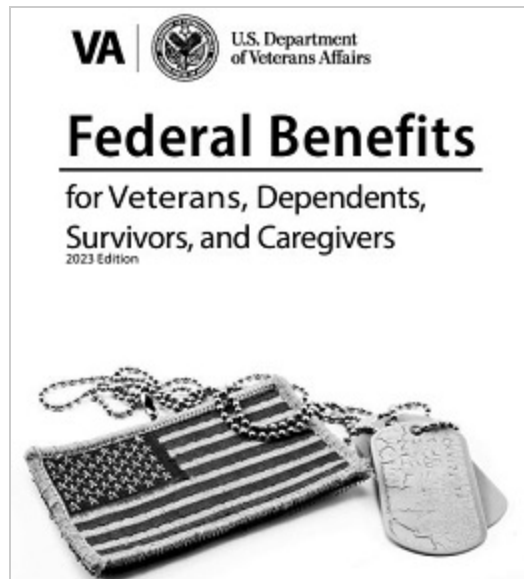
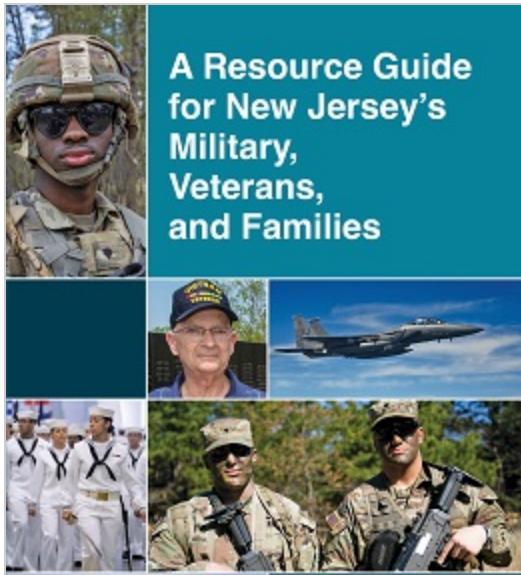
The New Jersey Army National Guard's 113th Infantry Regiment of the [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#) traces their history to this first muster of troops.

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.



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

Vacancies

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