

DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



OCTOBER 6, 2011

New Jersey Guardsman earns U.S. citizenship



Private 1st Class Cardon Edwards, far right, an East Orange resident and New Jersey National Guard Soldier, says the oath of renunciation and allegiance during a naturalization ceremony held at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Sept. 28. Edwards earned his citizenship through

serving in the U.S. Army as an infantryman and is currently deployed to Paktika Province, Afghanistan with the 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry Regiment, NJNG. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Makenzie Lang, Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Ryan DeCamp, Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - When Cardon Edwards came to the United States with his mother from Jamaica, the 13-year-old couldn't imagine he would fight for the country he was heading to.

Seven years later, the now 20-year-old is doing much more than that. Not only is he a private first class in the U.S. Army, he now has a much greater title – American.

Private 1st Class Cardon Edwards joined 44 other U.S. Soldiers and Marines from 25 countries in a naturalization ceremony to become American citizens at Bagram Airfield Sept. 28.

"It's a relief, I'd be lying if I said it wasn't," Edwards said. "My parents are happy to see the steps I've taken and the road I've come down, in joining the Army and becoming a citizen."

His family knows what he's going through. His mother earned her U.S. citizenship two years ago. He couldn't go through the same process because he had already turned 18, he said.

The ceremony comes during Edwards' first deployment. The infantryman from the 2nd Battalion 113th Infantry Regiment of the New Jersey Army National Guard, is now deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The PRT's main job is to help bring the different levels of government and the province's 400,000 residents together. This way, their futures involve peaceful leadership and development, not insurgency under groups like the Taliban.

Edwards and the rest of his security team from the New Jersey Army National Guard help make sure the meetings that help move the governance process can happen safely for coalition members and Afghans.

"I have worked with Private 1st Class Edwards since August 2010 to train for this deployment and what I've seen is that though he's a

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CITIZENSHIP

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younger soldier, he has the maturity of a seasoned non-commissioned officer,” said 1st Lt. John Cossolini, 2-113 platoon leader. “He’s mentally strong and physically tough. He has unlimited potential and I see him becoming one of our steadfast NCOs very soon.”

Experience is a trait of many NCOs. Edwards said this deployment is helping him gain that, which is one of the reasons he joined the military.

“This deployment hasn’t been that bad, I’ve gotten to experience the different cultures and people, I like it so far,” he said.

Though there’s a significant difference between U.S. and Afghan cultures that this deployment is showing him, Edwards said he didn’t notice a huge difference between the

U.S. and Jamaica. He said he will take advantage of some of the differences he has noticed between where he was born and the new country he’s now a citizen of.

“There’s more opportunities in the U.S. of course, with better jobs, schools and universities,” he said. “When the deployment is over I’ll head back to school using the G.I. Bill to continue working on an associates in accounting. Then I’ll move on to a bachelor’s degree.”

His platoon leader had nothing but good things to say about one of his most junior soldiers, who was promoted to private first class just six months ago.

“He has always displayed the motivation and dedication of an infantryman, I could not ask for more from this young troop – he constantly gives 100



Private 1st Class Cardon Edwards receives his certificate of citizenship from Robert Daum, U.S. Department of Homeland Security deputy district director, Sept. 28, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Makenzie Lang, Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

percent effort,” Cossolini said. “I have never seen his motivation, his trust in his fellow soldiers or his will to fight for his

country waiver.”

If anyone had doubt before, that’s gone. America is Edwards’ country.



**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF
MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS**

VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN AND MEDAL CEREMONY

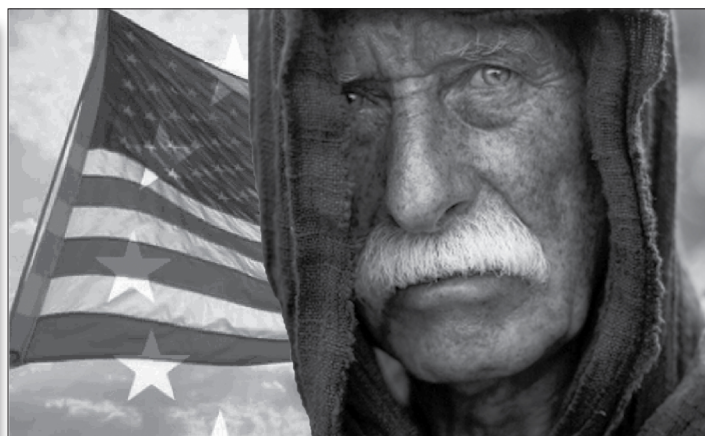
THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS WILL HOST A VETERAN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION OF STATE AND FEDERAL ENTITLEMENTS FOR VETERANS.

OCTOBER 11 - 13

OCEAN COUNTY MALL, 1201 HOOPER AVE., TOMS RIVER, N.J.

MEDAL CEREMONY AT 10:30 A.M. ON OCT. 11

KIOSK HOURS 10 A.M. - 8 P.M. DAILY

THEY FOUGHT FOR US, LETS FIGHT FOR THEM

NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will host a “Veterans Outreach Campaign” on Saturday, Oct. 15 at the “Stand Down” of North Jersey volunteering event!

DMAVA Veterans Service Officers will be present from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to assist veterans with questions and provide information on state and federal entitlements.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Pool and Recreation Center
211 West Kinney Street, Newark, N.J.

Education Programs Overview

❖ New Jersey National Guard Tuition (Waiver) Program

- 31 Participating State Schools (see Eligible State School list below)
- **Undergraduate/Graduate** Tuition waived for NJNG members (Army or Air)
 - Must remain in good standing with your unit
 - MUST apply for financial aid **annually** using FAFSA <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
 - Must apply for Post 9/11 GI Bill (if eligible) – not required if transferred to dependents
 - NJDMAVA Form 621-2-R "Commander's Certificate" **every semester** (unit issued)
 - Must comply with school policies, procedures and academic standards

Atlantic Cape Community College	Middlesex County College	Rowan University
Bergen Community College	Montclair State University	Rutgers , The State University of NJ
Brookdale Community College	County College of Morris	Salem Community College
Burlington County College	New Jersey City University	Sussex County Community College
Camden County College	NJ Institute of Technology	The College of New Jersey
Cumberland County College	Ocean County College	Thomas Edison State College
Essex County College	Passaic County Community College	Union County College
Gloucester County College	Ramapo College of NJ	Univ. of Medicine & Dentistry of NJ
Hudson County Community College	Raritan Valley Community College	Warren County Community College
Kean University	Richard Stockton College of NJ	William Paterson University of NJ
Mercer County Community College		

Each school has their own policies and procedures for administering the NJNGTP. You must find out which office is responsible for this program and meet with a representative from that office before you register. This will ensure that you follow the school's policy. For assistance, contact the Veterans Affairs Representative, the Financial Aid Office or the Registrar's Office. For website links to New Jersey Public Colleges and Universities go to:

<http://www.nj.gov/military/education/Colleges.htm>

❖ ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance

- Subject to the availability of funds from current Fiscal Year budget
- Must be attending any accredited school not listed in the above list
- \$250 per semester hour } Not to exceed 100% of tuition
- \$166 per quarter hour } Up to \$4,500 per soldier, per Fiscal Year
- Soldiers must request TA through www.GoArmyEd.com
 - prior to the course start date or before the school's late registration period
- Additional information: <http://www.nj.gov/military/education/TA.htm>

❖ Evaluation of Military Experience and Degree Planning

- For Military/Civilian educational assessment and degree planning support contact the Education Support Center (ESC) at: <http://www.education.nj.mil>
 - Click "Apply Online" and select "Degree Planning" from the drop down menu
- If you are unable to access the internet the ESC may be contacted at:
 - Toll Free 1-866-628-5999 or Fax 1-501-212-4928 or esc@ngpec.org

❖ Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) Info provided in a separate handout

NJARNG Education Center, 3650 Saylor's Pond Road, Ft. Dix, NJ 08640
1 (888) 859-0352 or (609) 562-0711 / 0714 / 0975 Fax: (609) 562-0188

<http://www.nj.gov/military/education>

Last update: 29 September 2011

FY 12

Montgomery GI Bill Overview

❖ Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (MGB-SR) Chapter 1606

- Basic Eligibility Requirements
 - High School Diploma or equivalent (GED)
 - Completion of IADT (Basic Training AND MOS Training)
 - First Reserve Component 6 Year Contract or service obligation after 30 June 1985
- Benefits of the MGB-SR: (VA Hotline: 1-888-GI-BILL-1)
 - Provides 36 full-time months of entitlement (at VA approved schools) *
 - FY12 monthly rates for Chapter 1606 are as follows:
 - Full-time (12+ college credits) **\$345 per month** (Max 36 full-time months)
 - ¾ Time (9-11 college credits) **\$258 per month** (Max 48 three-quarter time months)
 - ½ Time (6-8 college credits) **\$171 per month** (Max 72 half-time months)
 - < ½ Time (< 6 college credits) **\$86.25 per month** (Max 144 less than half-time months)
 - Expires **14 years** from the day of eligibility. Total entitlement = 36 x \$345 = **\$12,420**

❖ MGB-Reserve Educational Assistance Program Chapter 1607

- Basic Eligibility Requirements
 - National Guard and Reserve soldiers activated after September 11th, 2001
 - Period of activation must be 90 days or more on active duty (Title 10 orders)
- Benefits of the MGB-REAP: (VA Hotline: 1-888-GI-BILL-1)
 - Provides 36 full-time months of entitlement (at VA approved schools) *
 - Payment rates for Chapter 1607 are paid out on a percentage of the MGB-AD Chapter 30 (3 Yr. rate), percentages and rates for FY12 are as follows:
 - 90 days but less than one year **40%** (Full time student) **\$589.20**
 - One year but less than two years **60%** (Full time student) **\$883.80**
 - Two years or more **80%** (Full time student) **\$1,178.40**
 - Expires **10 years** after separation from the Selected Reserve or exhaustion of benefit

❖ Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (MGB-AD) Chapter 30

- Basic Eligibility Requirements
 - Active duty or AGR soldiers (Title 10 or 32) who have served 2 years or more
 - Character of discharge is "honorable"
 - Soldier paid enrollment fee of \$1200
- Benefits of the MGB-AD: (VA Hotline: 1-888-GI-BILL-1)
 - Provides 36 full-time months of entitlement (at VA approved schools) *
 - FY12 Payment rates for Chapter 30 are based upon time served on AD, they are as follows:
 - AD Service of 3 Years or more: Full-time student = **\$1,473.00** per full-time month of entitlement
 - AD Service Less Than 3 Years: Full-time student = **\$1,196.00** per full-time month of entitlement
 - Expires **10 years** from the day of discharge or exhaustion of benefit

❖ Montgomery GI Bill-Application Procedures

- Application Procedures www.gibill.va.gov/apply-for-benefits/application
 - Soldiers applying for benefits for the first time must submit **VA Form 22-1990**
 - "Application for VA Education Benefits" VA initial processing time is currently >3 months
 - If you have received benefits, but are now switching schools or MGB chapters, you must submit a **VA Form 22-1995 "Request For Change of Program or Place of Training"**
 - Applications for **Chapter 30, 33 and 1607** must be accompanied with supporting documents of qualifying service i.e. Discharge from Military Service (DD Form 214).
 - Applications for **Chapter 1606** must submit a **NOBE** (Notice of Basic Eligibility) to the Certifying Official at a VA approved school <http://www.nj.gov/military/saa/cd.html>

* NOTE: Maximum 48 full-time months of entitlement may be used if eligible for more than one chapter.

For more information go to: <http://www.gibill.va.gov>

Tuition waiver program celebrates 20-year anniversary

Program has been fundamental in enlistment and retention of NJ Guardsmen

The signing of the law that provided the New Jersey National Guard Tuition Program (NJNGTP) to its members recently reached its 20-year anniversary.

On Oct. 3, 1991, then Gov. Jim Florio signed into law a significant legislation, the New Jersey Tuition Program Bill (A-3222), during a ceremony held at the Lawrenceville Armory.

During this ceremony Florio made the following statement, "when a man or woman steps up to serve their country and their state, they stir our pride. The men and women who serve in the New Jersey National Guard know all about pride. It's part of why they serve. Today's bill signing ceremony is a reflection of that pride we have and this bill is a way of saying thanks. I'm pleased to sign it because it reflects my belief that education is just another word for opportunity."

The NJNGTP has long been a primary incentive for enlistment and retention for members of the New Jersey National Guard.

It has been provided through the generosity of the citizens of the state of New Jersey in grateful recognition for the sacrifices and contributions of its Citizen Soldiers and Airmen.

This benefit has given countless Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard the opportunity to better themselves, the New Jersey National Guard, and the communities they now serve.

Of important note are those individuals at the state schools and at the NJNG units who have worked hard to ensure the NJNGTP worked for the service members.

Some changes to the law have occurred through the years that have improved the program.

The NJNGTP now provides tuition free enrollments at any one of the 31 public colleges and universities in New Jersey, for up to 15 credits per semester all the way up to a graduate degree.

In addition, these benefits are extended to the child or surviving spouse of a deceased member of the NJNG who completed initial active duty training and was killed in the performance of his or her duties while a member of the New Jersey National Guard.

For more information about Civilian Education Benefits go to www.nj.gov/military/education.



**30th
Anniversary
of the
Governor's
Military
Review**



**New Jersey
National Guard
Oct. 2, 2011**

**Please visit the New Jersey
National Guard's Facebook
Page to view more photos
of this event!**



Soldiers from the 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, New Jersey National Guard, sing the Army song during a farewell ceremony at the Lawrenceville Armory on Oct. 3. To view more photos of the farewell ceremony visit the New Jersey National Guard's Facebook Page. (Photo by Mark C. Olsen, NJ DMAVA/PA)



Soldiers from the Operational Mentor and Liaison Team #2, New Jersey National Guard, are recognized during a farewell ceremony at the Lawrenceville Armory on Oct. 3. To view more photos of the farewell ceremony visit the New Jersey National Guard's Facebook Page. (Photo by Mark C. Olsen, NJ DMAVA/PA)

Tax\$ave open enrollment for 2012

Open enrollment for the 2012 State Employees Tax Savings Program (Tax\$ave) started Oct. 1.

Since participation in a Tax\$ave FSA Plan must be renewed annually, state employees are encouraged to enroll if one wants to participate in an FSA Plan during 2012.

Get Tax\$ave Open Enrollment literature online at: www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/taxsave.shtml

General membership meeting for AUSA

The Fort Monmouth and Fort Dix chapters of the Association of the United States Army, and the mid-Atlantic chapter of the Army Aviation Association would like to invite you to their Veteran's Reception and General Membership Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 3, from 5-10 p.m., at the Laurita Winery in New Egypt, N.J.

Cost for this event is \$25 per person, but free for any one signing up as a corporate or individual membership. A buffet and cash bar will be available.

Guest speaker for this event will be Charles V. Maraldo Jr., director of CERDEC Flight Activity at Lakehurst, N.J.

For more information on this event, please contact Kit Roache via email at KRoache@caci.com or at 732-460-7870. For reservations contact Diane Carnes via email at diane.carnes@macb-esi.com or at 732-389-4320.

Laurita Winery is located at 35 Archertown Road in New Egypt. (GPS users enter 85 Archertown Road).

Veteran job opportunity expo at Philly

RecruitMilitary, a top full-service military-to-civilian recruiting firm, in cooperation with the American Legion, are sponsoring Veteran Opportunity Expo in Philadelphia on Nov. 3.

Veteran-friendly employers, franchisors, and educational institutions will be in attendance to offer a variety of opportunities to all veterans, transitioning military personnel, and military family members.

The free event will be held at Lincoln Financial Field, which is located at 1020 Pattison Avenue, Philadelphia on Thursday, Nov. 3, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To register for the event please visit RecruitMilitary's candidate information Web page at www.recruitmilitary.com/expos/395-Philadelphia/candidates/information or contact Anthony Carney, military marketing specialist, at 513-677-7088.

For events details and directions, visit www.recruitmilitary.com.



Veterans get help from special clinical and research program at the VA

The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center at the East Orange campus of the VA New Jersey Health Care System (NJ WRIISC) is a national center for post-deployment health concerns.

The highest priority is to help returning veterans get the best care they deserve. The NJ WRIISC accomplishes this through an extensive clinical and educational programs for veterans with difficult to diagnose symptoms and exposure related concerns, as well as targeted research programs.

This research important to veteran care because often, it can answer questions about causality or lead to new and innovative treatment approaches. The NJ WRIISC has an impressive research program that is focused on translating findings on veteran health into improved clinical care.

Right now, the center is performing cutting edge research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), blast-related injury, concussions, fatigue and the effects of exposure to burn pits and sand storms.

Current projects include working with NASA and academic centers such as Harvard University and Johns Hopkins, to utilize the most advanced testing systems to better understand post-deployment health problems.

The center is exploring new avenues of treatment such as integrative medicine programs like yoga and Qi Gong. Veterans participation in a WRIISC research project could yield long term benefits to all veterans.

For more information on the WRIISC, visit their webpage at www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/nj/research/research-studies.asp or our website at www.warrelatedillness.va.gov or contact us at 1-800-248-8005.

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

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

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