

View in Web Browser

February 14, 2024



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner



From the Commissioner

Welcome Home, Airmen

It was my pleasure to welcome home several hundred Airmen of the 177th Fighter Wing Jan. 28, 2024, at the Federal Aviation Administration William J. Hughes Technical Center, Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey.

Airmen of the 177th Fighter Wing returned home from a deployment spanning several months to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The entire New Jersey National Guard leadership team is grateful for their safe return, and we wish them each a successful reintegration.

Thank you for your service, and as always, your interest in DMAVA.

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

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



Spotlight

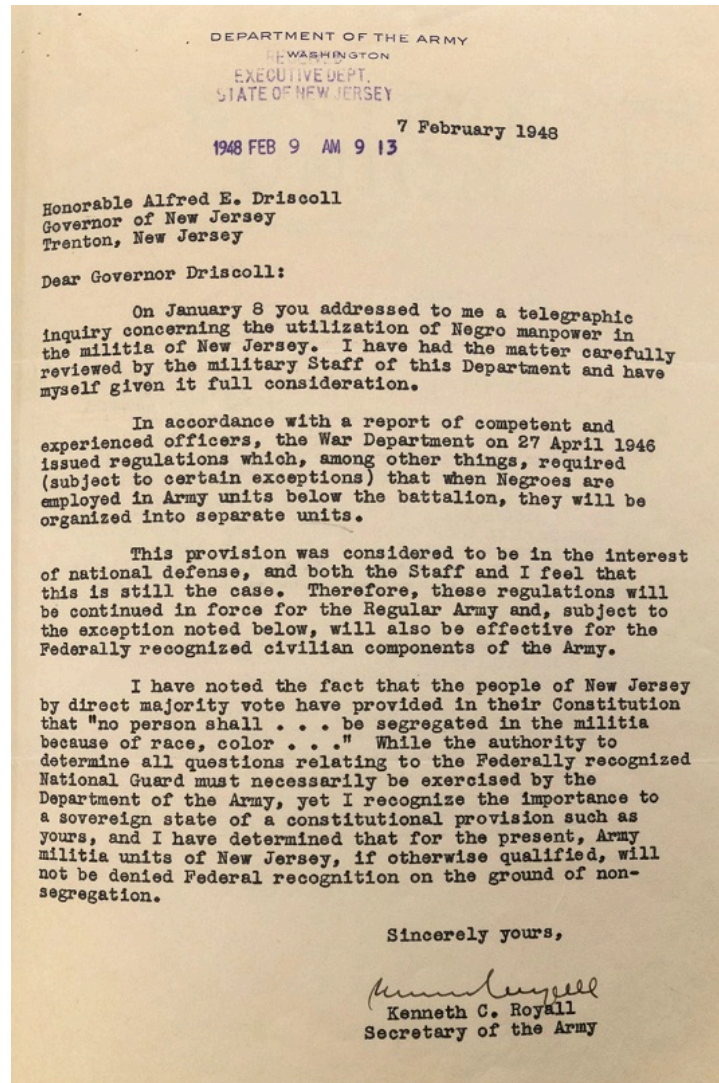


Black History Month – Connect Through Art

Black History Month started as a week in 1926 and became a federally supported month, February, in 1976. This year's theme focuses on Black art and artists, which leads us to consider the nexus of Veterans, Black Americans and art.

Art gives us ways to reach each other, ways to generate understanding, and ways to forge a better future. Listen to [one of our own Veterans](#) talk about discovering the value of creating art at Veterans Haven North.

Local opportunities to experience the art of Black artists exist throughout the Garden State, whether that's visual art, performing arts, music or beyond. Online, you can find collections related to many genres at the [National Gallery of Art](#), and check out the [Library of Congress](#) or our own [National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey](#) for a collection of black Veteran personal narratives.



The End of Segregation in New Jersey

Although history credits President Harry Truman with desegregating America's military, the truth is that racial integration had already arrived in New Jersey, thanks to a governor and National Guard leaders who had stubbornly insisted on equality in their forces.

In the space of four months, from November 1947 to February 1948, the New Jersey National Guard changed history. The story begins at a time when the New Jersey National Guard was growing.

World War II had been over for more than a year and the New Jersey National Guard was recruiting new members to fill the recently created 50th Armored Division. The National Guard Bureau, which fell under the War Department, had authorized New Jersey to organize the 372nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery group.

Because integration did not yet exist in the military, the 372nd would reflect the United States Army's policy toward Blacks – the unit was to be composed entirely of Black Soldiers.

And this is where the story would have ended except for one event.

[Read the rest of the story.](#)

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](#)

★ ★ ★ NJ KOVA INITIATIVE PRESENTS ★ ★ ★

NORMALIZE THE CONVERSATION

• • • Veteran Night Out & Unfiltered Discussion • • •

1ST

MARCH, 2024

FRIDAY

5:30PM - 8:00PM

AT
MISSION POINT CHURCH
900 W NEW YORK AVE.
SOMERS POINT, NJ 08244

FREE
ADMISSION



Please join NJ KOVA for unfiltered stories regarding Veterans mental health, what helped them during recovery and transition, and the effects on their loved ones.

Dinner & Childcare Provided On-site


Dinner Served at 5:30PM
Program begins at 6:30PM




Scan To Register
Or
Use the link Below



To Register Please Visit: KOVA South Jersey



VA Department of Veterans Affairs
Newark Regional Office



PACT Act Information & VA Claims Consultation/Clinic

WHEN: Saturday, March 2, 2024/10AM – 2PM

WHERE: Joint Base McGuire/Dix/Lakehurst
Commissary Parking Lot
3452 Broidy Road, Fort Dix, NJ 08640

WHO: Veteran, service members and dependents
eligible to receive VA benefits

WHY: PACT Act information about VA
entitlements and benefits, compensation
and VA Healthcare

For more information call: 973-297-3384 or jennifer.myers6@va.gov

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.

- February 15 | Rutgers Piscataway
[NJ SOS Middlesex County Stakeholders Meeting](#)
- February 17 | Cape May
[Community Resource Day](#)
- February 25 | Bordentown
[Reserve & National Guard Transition Benefits Workshop](#)
- March 2 | Bordentown
[First Aid/CPR/AED Certification Training](#)
- March 2 | Ridgefield
[Community Veteran Resource Outreach Fair](#)

- March 5 | County College of Morris
[Veteran Suicide Awareness Seminar](#)
- March 14 | Rahway
[State Medal Ceremony](#)

Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

NJ National Guard



Hou Promoted to Major General

New Jersey Gov. Philip D. Murphy applauds Maj. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., The Adjutant General of New Jersey, after the promotion order was read promoting her to Major General at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, NJ on February 3, 2024.

General Hou commands the more than 8,400 Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard.

She leads, directs, and manages the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in the execution of federal and state missions.

In addition, she manages all state veterans' programs, commissions, and facilities in New Jersey.

[View Ceremony Images](#)

[View Guest Photo Images](#)

Join Our Team

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



DMAVA Veterans Services



The February 2024 edition of the Veterans Journal is now available.

Get New Edition



Video Interview with Allie Petracci

DMAVA continues to modernize our Homes to enhance the quality of life of our Veterans and prioritize their care.

Today, you'll meet Allie Petracci, Speech Language Pathologist at the [Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland](#).

Petracci discusses how she spends her time with our heroes and the essential technology she uses at the Home to further the Residents' cognitive mobility, motor skills, and more.

[Watch Video](#)



Congressman visits Paramus Home

U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer, 5th District, New Jersey, hands out Valentine's Day cards to residents at the [New Jersey Veterans Home at Paramus](#) on February 12, 2024.

[View Images](#)



Happy Valentine's Day!

Thank you to everyone who has participated in a Valentines for Vets program, we feel the love! The residents of our three Veterans Memorial Homes at Menlo, Paramus and Vineland have received so many heartfelt and handmade cards. To all involved, thank you once more for your continued partnership and support to our Garden State heroes.

**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**



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

Veterans Outreach Schedule

Veterans Service Offices

DMAVA Departments



Retirement Seminar

The New Jersey National Guard Transition/Retirement Services Office held a retirement seminar on February 10, 2024 at the Joint Military & Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, NJ.

Service members, retirees, and spouses can register for a future retirement seminar at retirement.njarmyguard.com.

Soldier & Family Readiness Team

<p>BORDENTOWN Michele Daisey Office: 609-496-9230 Cell: 609-802-2241 michele.daisey1.civ@army.mil</p>	<p>TEANECK Denise Gonzalez Office: 201-268-7454 Cell: 609-668-5282 denise.l.gonzalez2.civ@army.mil</p>	<p>MORRISTOWN Diana Becker Office: 973-829-4017 609-802-6921 diana.e.becker2.civ@army.mil</p>
<p>VINELAND Phillip Morse Office: 609-572-5227 Cell: 609-864-9282 philip.c.morse.civ@army.mil</p>	<p>SEA GIRT Brenda Irwin Office: 732-820-6094 Cell: 609-341-6579 brenda.l.irwin2.civ@army.mil</p>	<p>SOMERSET Melissa Nicolato Office: 732-867-0920 Cell: 609-351-0999 melissa.k.nicolato.civ@army.mil</p>
<p>WOODBURY Kenneth Lucas Office: 856-537-6133 Cell: 609-802-6924 kenneth.d.lucas2.civ@army.mil</p>		<p>LAWRENCEVILLE Dawn Jimenez Office: 609-671-6681 Cell: 609-802-6911 dawn.m.jimenez.civ@army.mil</p>

NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.



**YOUTH
CHALLENGE
ACADEMY**

Now accepting applications
for Class 58 - July 2024.

**APPLY
NOW!**

**TUITION
FREE**



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

 njyca.org/admissions

 rpm@dmava.nj.gov

 (800) 997-5587 / (732) 974-6516

Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

DEIB Newsletter

State Partners

VETERANS DISCOUNTS

GLOUCESTER COUNTY OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

2023 EDITION

(856) 401-7660
 vets@co.gloucester.nj.us
 www.gloucestercountynj.gov

GLOUCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 Frank J. DiMarco, Director
 Denice DiCarlo, Liaison

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



VA proposes rule to extend presumed areas of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides, making it easier for exposed Veterans to receive their earned benefits

VA News | February 9, 2024

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs issued a proposed rule outlining plans to expand the locations and time frames for which VA presumes exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. If this proposed rule becomes final, VA will implement a new presumption of exposure to locations where herbicides were tested, used, or stored outside of Vietnam.

Specifically, this proposed rule would add locations in the United States ([full list of US locations where Agent Orange was tested or stored](#)), [Canada](#), and [India](#) to the existing presumptives for Agent Orange in Vietnam, Cambodia, Johnson Atoll, Guam, American Samoa, Korea, Laos, and Thailand.

A presumption of exposure means that VA automatically assumes that Veterans who served in certain locations were exposed to certain toxins. Presumptives lower the burden of proof required to receive disability benefits, helping Veterans get the benefits they deserve as quickly as possible. This expansion of presumptives will help Veterans who served in the specified locations receive health care and benefits for [certain cancers and chronic conditions](#).

To be eligible, a Veteran must have served in the identified location(s) during a specific time period and currently have a condition(s) presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

[Read Full News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadline - February 22, 2024 - for Vets to Get Reimbursed for Emergency Medical Expenses at Non-VA Facilities

Last year, VA created a unique, one-year open period during which veterans enrolled in VA Health Care can apply for VHA reimbursement of their emergency medical expenses at non-VA facilities for emergencies that occurred at any time during the last 14 years.

This right to a new reimbursement decision applies even if the veteran was previously denied reimbursement or never even applied for reimbursement in the past. But to be eligible for this new reimbursement decision, veterans must apply to VHA for reimbursement by February 22, 2024.

[Learn More](#)

Defense Department expands retiree, dependent ID card renewals by mail

C. Todd Lopez | DOD News | January 16, 2024

As part of an expansion of a Defense Department pilot program that kicked off in February 2023, most Uniformed Services Identification, or USID, card holders can now renew their cards online and receive them in the mail, instead of having to schedule an appointment at an ID card office.

Before this expansion, only sponsors with a common access card could request online renewals, but now most retirees and non-CAC holders are eligible.

The ongoing pilot program allows family members, retirees and others to avoid making appointments at a pass and ID card office. Instead, they can renew USID cards online via the [ID Card Office](#)

[online](#), or IDCO, website. It's important to note that the pilot program is for renewal of the USID card only - not for the initial issue. Also, the pilot is limited to cardholders within the United States, though expansion to non-US addresses is in the works.

More information about the online USID card renewal pilot program, including restrictions and requirements, is available on the [cac.mil website](#).

[Read Full News Release](#)

VA Video Connect: Where convenience and quality care align

Joseph Berks | VA News | February 5, 2024

VA Video Connect (VVC) makes it easier than ever for caregivers to join the telehealth visits of the Veterans for whom they provide care. VVC is VA's secure videoconferencing app designed to help Veterans and their caregivers quickly and easily meet with VA health care providers through live video on any computer or mobile device with an internet connection.

"Telehealth is a dynamic tool that gives Veterans access to the soonest and best care," said Caregiver Support Program (CSP) Executive Director Dr. Colleen Richardson. "Providing the best care also means offering the caregivers who support Veterans a platform to collaborate with VA health care teams."

[Read Full News Release](#)



VA Eye Care Services

In this series of theSITREP, the host chats with Dr. Michelle Miranda about optometry services at the Department of Veterans Affairs: to include how to schedule an eye exam, types of lenses and frames available, does VA provide contact lenses or LASIK surgery, and much more.

[theSITREP Podcast](#)

Featured Links

- [National Parks Pass](#)
- [VALife Insurance](#)
- [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](#)

Community Spotlight



Cub Scouts of America

Soldiers with the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, New Jersey Army National Guard, teach Cub Scouts how to properly fold the American Flag in a military funeral ceremony, at Conlon Hall, Bergenfield, NJ on February 6, 2024.

[View Images](#)

In The News



National Guard Bureau Leaders Say Taking Care of Guardsmen Is Key to Meeting Mission at Home, Abroad

Joseph Clark | DOD News | February 8, 2024

Taking care of those serving on the front lines both at home and abroad is critical as the National Guard meets its mission, the force's top leaders said today.

Army Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said that as the global security landscape has become increasingly complex, the National Guard continues to fill its role as an indispensable warfighting force, while at the same time responding in times of crisis at home.

[Read Full Story](#)



These Jersey Shore beaches are free for veterans, active duty military in 2024

Katie Kausch | NJ.com | February 9, 2024

Beach badges are a nearly-unavoidable necessity when visiting the Jersey Shore. Veterans and active-duty military can avoid the fees with more than a dozen towns offering free badges.

Some towns offer free, full-season badges that must be obtained ahead of time, while others offer free beach access just by flashing your ID to the badge checker.

[Read Full Story](#)



Bill to Name Part of I-295 After Bordentown's Benjamin Moore Passes State Senate

Kristin Antonello | tapinto.net | February 13, 2024

TRENTON, NJ - Legislation that would name a bridge on Interstate 295 after a Bordentown resident who died while serving in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan has advanced in the New Jersey Legislature.

S1433, sponsored by Senator Troy Singleton, would designate the bridge over Crosswicks Creek on I-295 North as the “Benjamin Moore and the 693rd Sappers Company Memorial Highway” in honor of Bordentown resident Benjamin Moore, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2011 while serving in the U.S. Army during Operation Enduring Freedom.

The bill unanimously passed the Senate on February 12.

[Read Full Story](#)



Linwood VA clinic expected to open by the end of the year

John Russo | The Press of Atlantic City | February 3, 2024

MAYS LANDING — A new Department of Veterans Affairs clinic may still be ready in about a year's time, federal officials said

Thursday night during a town hall meeting.

The clinic, which will be located inside the Cornerstone Commerce Center on Route 9 in Linwood and replaces the one two miles away in Northfield, is in a "hurry-up-and-wait" phase, lead engineer on the project Jermaine Best said.

Best joined representatives from VA Wilmington (Delaware), who held a town hall meeting for about 60 people at VFW Post 220 on Route 50.

The new VA facility, which will be 22,500 square feet and will offer more opportunities for Atlantic County veterans to get medical help, was slated to be opened by the end of 2024. If everything remains on track, that may still happen, Best said.

[Read Full Story](#)

Image courtesy [Wilmington VA Medical Center](#).

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.

February 14, 2012
Operation Iraqi Freedom
SSGT Oscar E. Canon
U.S. Marine Corps
Dumont, New Jersey

February 26, 2005
Operation Iraqi Freedom
PFC Min Soo Choi
U.S. Army
River Vale, New Jersey

February 18, 2007
Operation Enduring Freedom
CW3 John A. Quinlan
U.S. Army
Bradley Beach, New Jersey

February 26, 2009
Operation Iraqi Freedom
SPC Brian M. Connolly
U.S. Army
Union Beach, New Jersey

February 21, 2010
Operation Enduring Freedom
SGT Marcos Gorra
U.S. Army
North Bergen, 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



Charles Hopkins with his wife.

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

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.

February 25, 1966

Marine Staff Sergeant Peter S. Connor of South Orange was

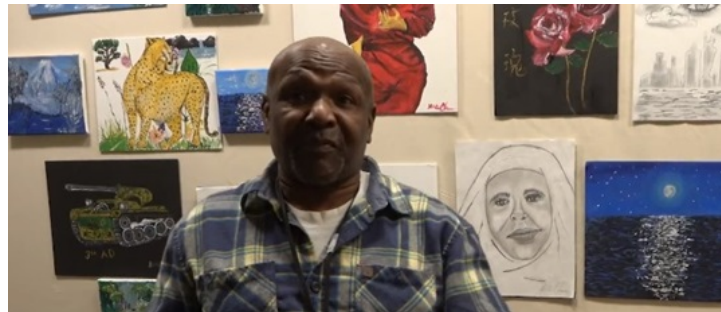
of harm's way, he was killed in action. Basilone was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, the Marine Corps' second highest decoration. He was inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2011.

mortally wounded in Vietnam when he threw himself on a hand grenade to save his men from injury. Connor's self-sacrifice was posthumously recognized when he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

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.

Veteran Spotlight



Willie Clemson

"It's a Zen room."

At [Veterans Haven North](#), United States Army Veteran Willie Clemson channeled his inner Picasso and draped his artwork around the Haven in Glen Gardner, N.J.

To compliment his masterpieces, the Haven included musical instruments to turn Clemson's gallery into a peaceful oasis.

[Watch Video](#)

Did You Know?



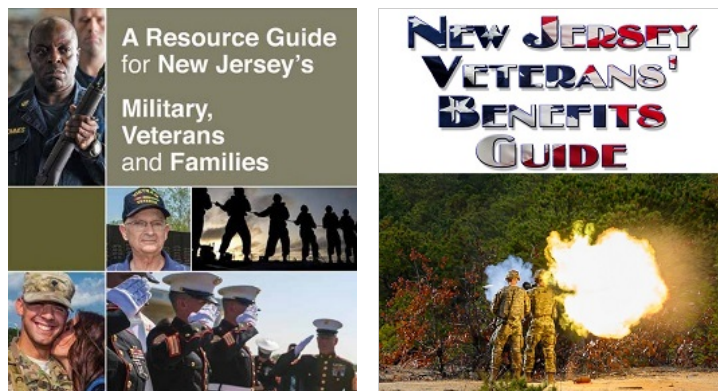
Brigadier General William S. Frye

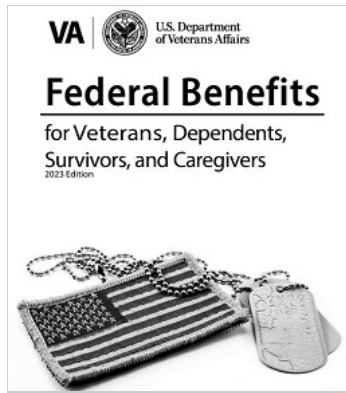
The first African-American general officer of the the New Jersey National Guard and one of the first in the National Guard was Brig. Gen. William S. Frye.

A World War II veteran, Frye commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 311th Anti-Aircraft Artillery in 1948. Rising through the ranks of New Jersey's AAA units, he served as the 50th Armored Division's Inspector General, then commanded the 44th Area Headquarters. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1977.

In his civilian life, Frye served as Montclair's postmaster. Frye passed away in 2006.

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



[Click Here](#)

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

Please email us at outreach@dmava.nj.gov with feedback and comments regarding the newsletter. If you would like to contribute with an item of interest to our subscribers, please email us your proposal.

Visit the [DMAVA archives](#) to view previous editions of our newsletter.

Forward to a friend

Subscribe



nj.gov/military

NJ Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
101 Eggert Crossing Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

[Privacy Notice](#)

Disclaimer: The appearance of any non-DMAVA information or hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement of the products or services on the part of the New Jersey Department of Military & Veterans Affairs.