



DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

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June 12, 2014

EARNING THEIR SPURS

STORY ON PAGE 4



Staff Sgt. Sarah Zadoyko, 1-102nd Cavalry, left, watches as troopers feed and sing to a toy pony during the unit's Spur Ride at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst earlier this week. The unit's current 40 Spur Holders wore black t-shirts and Stetsons and observed 120 members from the unit battle their way through six different stations, culminating with the presentation of their spurs at the end of the two-day event. (Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA)

HIGHLIGHTS

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN -- 7,000 miles from New Jersey, two 177th Fighter Wing Airmen unexpectedly became neighbors at a forward operating base (FOB) on the outskirts of Kabul, while serving on separate important missions.

Lt. Col. Jesse Arnstein, assigned to the 177th Logistics Readiness Squadron, is deployed as the Public Affairs Director for the task force that oversees U.S. detainee operations, while Tech. Sgt. Chris Donohue, from the 227th Air Support Operations Squadron, is deployed as a combat advisor and Joint Terminal Attack Controller for the joint U.S./Albanian mission.

Arnstein's duties include responding to inquiries from major news outlets such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and the Associated Press, as well as coordinating on updates to senior U.S. government officials.

"The mission is tremendously rewarding," said Arnstein. "It [the mission] has the potential to be very high-profile; from answering congressional inquiries, to preparing responses to questions from the most well-known western media outlets, to dealing with other national governments."

"It's also exhilarating to regularly interact with foreign soldiers and civilians," said Arnstein.

Arnstein was amazed to come across a fellow "Jersey Devil" at his FOB.

"I did a double-take as I spotted the New Jersey state flag outside a cabin on the FOB," said Arnstein. "I went inside to investigate, and to my amazement I saw a familiar face – Tech. Sgt. Chris Donohue."

Donohue, already a seasoned veteran from his time in the Marine Corps and the New Jersey Army National Guard is an advisor for the Afghan National Army's (ANA) 1st Mobile Strike Force (MSF). The MSF is a quick reaction force designed to preemptively attack, disrupt, and destroy enemy operations.

"We have a very busy schedule, but it is rewarding to see the ANA take the lead as we begin to transfer into Operation Resolute Support," said Donohue.

Operation Resolute Support is the post-2014 NATO training and advisory mission, which will see the ANA self-sufficient and relying less on coalition forces.

Arnstein reflected on the deployment, and how the people back home have made him Jersey Strong.

"Communications have been difficult, but the expressions of concern, gratitude and support from family and friends are humbling and so very meaningful," said Arnstein. "The mission here is fascinating, and I'm working with some of the finest people I have ever known."

Jersey Strong

Story by Tech. Sgt. Matt Hecht,
177th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



Energy Conservation

Energy Conservation Tip of the Week

The heavier your vehicle is, the less efficient it is. Remove any unnecessary heavy items from your vehicle to save money on fuel. You can save \$0.08 per gallon by removing 100 pounds.

Did You Know?

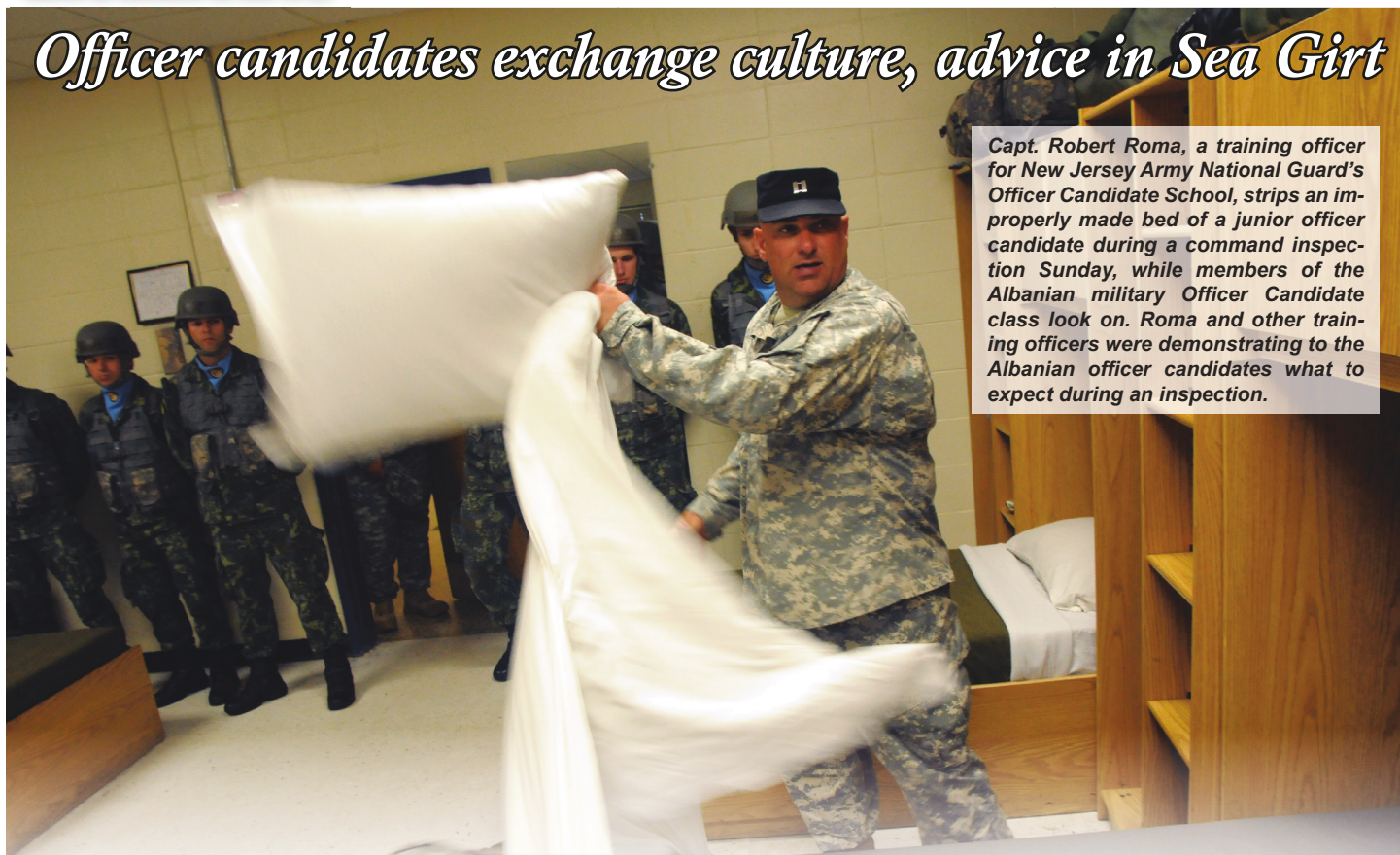
Fuel efficiency for new cars has been on the rise. In 1980, the average new car was getting 24.3 miles per gallon. In 2011, that number had risen to 33.8 miles per gallon. By 2025, new cars will be required to achieve 54.5 miles per gallon.

If you would like more information about our energy and water conservation efforts, please contact Christopher Moore, Energy Manager at christopher.moore@dmava.nj.gov.

New Jersey's
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Officer candidates exchange culture, advice in Sea Girt



Capt. Robert Roma, a training officer for New Jersey Army National Guard's Officer Candidate School, strips an improperly made bed of a junior officer candidate during a command inspection Sunday, while members of the Albanian military Officer Candidate class look on. Roma and other training officers were demonstrating to the Albanian officer candidates what to expect during an inspection.

Story and photo by Sgt. Bill Addison, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Three phases of New Jersey Army National Guard and Albanian military officer candidates converged in a cross-cultural exchange on June 8 at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt.

The Albanian Officer Candidate School program is being conducted by the New Jersey Army National Guard and is the first time a state's National Guard will train foreign military officer candidates as part of the State Partnership Program.

"This is a great information exchange between the different OCS classes, from the Albanians to the Americans," said Maj. Lonell Jenkins, OCS commander. "Everyone has something to gain from it."

The Albanian officer candidates had the opportunity to gain information from the senior officer candidate class, which is preparing to move to phase three next week. They also imparted some wisdom onto the junior class as to what to expect in phase one.

"Our Albanian class has already reached phase two, so they can lend some insight for our junior class into what to expect in phase one," said Capt. Matthew Zilinski, OCS senior platoon training officer.

Zilinski said it was the first time the three phases of the program had the opportunity to interact with each other. Not only did it provide each phase new insight into what the next phase holds, but allowed them to see how each class is treated by the training officers.

"This was a chance to let our Albanian officer candidates observe how we treat and train our New Jersey candidates, from our senior class that's getting ready to go to phase three next week, to our junior class that's getting ready to head to phase one"

And while the candidates took full advantage of the chance to learn

from their senior counterparts, they also asked a range of questions regarding the differences between the two countries militaries.

"It gives them insights into what other nation's military officers are facing," said Zilinski. "They're asking questions about their infrastructure, their country, plus how it works for the military; from lower-enlisted to the (non-commissioned officer) to the officer corps.

The Albanian candidates explained how the military operates in their country, and expressed their desire to take some of the American concepts home with them. One particular practice they found valuable is the increased responsibilities bestowed upon non-commissioned officers.

They also discussed the difficulties they face in Albanian developing NCO's who want to take charge, knowing that they can make more money outside of military.

When asked by one American officer candidate how the Albanian officers maintain their motivation, the candidates said they were proud of the uniform they wore, of their service to their country, and the chance to improve their own country.

"It's not only payment that makes us motivated," said officer candidate Alban Dafa. "It's also the desire, the hope to make it better."

Dafa said that the country of Albania has been struggling in a number of areas, and he hopes that he and his fellow candidates can help develop Albania's military into an organization that Albanians can be proud of.

"We want to make it better for ourselves, we want to make it better for our families, we want to make it better for each and every person who lives in Albania," said Dafa.

"Each American is proud of their Army," he said. "We saw it from the moment we got here. We saw the way civilians looked at you and we want that in Albania."



CAVALRY TROOPS EARN THEIR SPURS

A black Stetson wearing Spur Holder of the 1-102nd Cavalry watches as members of the unit climb over a barrier while making sure a tow cable never hits the ground during the unit's Spur Ride. The two-day

event at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst saw 120 troopers battle and conquer their way through six different stations to earn their spurs. (Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA)

By Sgt. Saul Rosa, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

They may not be riding horseback anymore, but the Soldiers of the 1st of the 102nd Cavalry tested their grit and mettle to enter the Order of the Spurs.

With a past more entrenched than the mud they waded through, the troops earned their spurs through a three-day rite of passage known as the Spur Ride.

"You can earn the gold spurs through combat or the silver spurs through the Spur Ride held by a Cavalry unit," said Sgt. Maj. Ronald Ambrose.

Each day, the inductees faced new and different challenges. The ride started on foot with a road march to the area where the Soldiers would be tested through a series of stations demonstrating how each contributes to the success of the mission.

"The goal of the Spur Ride in general is to build camaraderie, team work and unity," said Capt. John Craddock "This gives everyone the opportunity to see how each of the different units operate and understands their importance and role in the bigger picture."

At each station, the soldiers faced not only mental tasks, but also physical stress.

At station 3 of the trail, inductees had to perform vehicle maintenance and recovery with unique challenges.

In one scenario, Soldiers were required to low crawl to a ve-

hicle to obtain new parts for their HUMVEE, while the rest of their squad members were stressed by rolling in mud.

Pulling from years of tradition, there was great emphasis on the culture and history of the Cavalry and focus on the mantra of learning from the past.

When Soldiers arrived at Staff Sgt. John Cosel's station, they learned about the Battle of Little Bighorn. The troops discussed how the battle could have had a different outcome had Gen. George A. Custer employed modern warfare tactics.

"Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it," said Cosel. "This shows them the particulars of the battle and how different it could have went (sic)."

Throughout the Spur Ride, each squad had to also carry a toy pony. The Soldiers had to feed the pony throughout the day and take care of it at every station or it would die. The lesson: Soldiers need to take care of each other or face a similar fate.

By overcoming hardships and upholding military tradition and history, 120 members of the 1st of the 102nd Cavalry will don their first pair of silver spurs and finally ride with the Order of the Spurs.

"It aides the Cavalry Soldier," said Ambrose. "It distinguished them, because there is no one further in front. We are the ones that go out."

HIGHLIGHTS



**2014 Hiring Our Heroes Veterans Event – Somerville, NJ
 Stevenson – D’Alessio American Legion Post #12
 232 Union Avenue – Somerville, NJ
 June 18, 2014**

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP: 8:30 A.M.

HIRING FAIR: 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M

This American Legion-, Merck- sponsored hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS), the New Jersey Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Goodwill Industries International, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the New Jersey State Parole Board, NBC News, and other local partners.

<p>EMPLOYERS</p> <p>Must register for FREE at HiringOurHeroes.org</p>	<p>JOB SEEKERS</p> <p>Register for FREE at HiringOurHeroes.org to guarantee admission. Walk-ins welcome but space not guaranteed.</p>
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A workshop for veterans and other military job seekers that focuses on resume writing, tips for successfully navigating hiring fairs, military skill translation, and interviewing will start at 8:30 A.M. To register for the Hiring Our Heroes Employment Workshop, visit HiringOurHeroes.org.

For registration questions, please contact us at hiringourheroes@uschamber.com or call 202-463-5807.



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VA RELEASES DATA ON QUALITY, ACCESS TO VETERANS HEALTHCARE

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs released June 9 the results from its Nationwide Access Audit, along with facility level patient access data, medical center quality and efficiency data, and mental health provider survey data, for all Veterans health facilities.

Full details made public at VA.gov follow Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson's commitment last week in Phoenix, Arizona and San Antonio, Texas to provide timely access to quality healthcare Veterans have earned and deserved.

"It is our duty and our privilege to provide Veterans the care they have earned through their service and sacrifice," said Gibson. "As the President has said, as Secretary Shinseki said, and as I stated plainly last week, we must work together to fix the unacceptable, systemic problems in accessing VA healthcare."

"Today, we're providing the details to offer transparency into the scale of our challenges, and of our system itself. I'll repeat – this data shows the extent of the systemic problems we face, problems that demand immediate actions," said Gibson. "As of today, VA has contacted 50,000 Veterans across the country to get them off of wait lists and into clinics. Veterans deserve to have full faith in their VA, and they will keep hearing from us until all our Veterans receive the care they've earned."

Furthermore, Gibson announced a series of additional actions in response to the audit's findings and data, including:

- **Establishing New Patient Satisfaction Measurement Program**

Acting Secretary Gibson has directed VHA to immediately begin developing a new patient satisfaction measurement program to provide real-time, robust, location-by-location information on patient satisfaction, to include satisfaction data of those Veterans attempting to access VA healthcare for the first time. This program will be developed with input from Veterans Service Organizations, outside health care organizations, and other entities. This will ensure VA collects an additional set of data – directly from the Veteran's perspective – to understand how VA is doing throughout the system.

- **Holding Senior Leaders Accountable**

Where audited sites identify concerns

within the parent facility or its affiliated clinics, VA will trigger administrative procedures to ascertain the appropriate follow-on personnel actions for specific individuals.

- **Ordering an Immediate VHA Central Office and VISN Office Hiring Freeze**

Acting Secretary Gibson has ordered an immediate hiring freeze at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) central office in Washington D.C. and the 21 VHA Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) regional offices, except for critical positions to be approved by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis. This action will begin to remove bureaucratic obstacles and establish responsive, forward leaning leadership.

- **Removing 14-Day Scheduling Goal**

VA is eliminating the 14-day scheduling goal from employee performance contracts. This action will eliminate incentives to engage in inappropriate scheduling practices or behaviors.

- **Increasing Transparency by Posting Data Twice-Monthly**

At the direction of the Acting Secretary, VHA will post regular updates to the access data released today at the middle and end of each month at VA.gov. Twice-monthly data updates will enhance transparency and provide the most immediate information to Veterans and the public on Veterans access to quality healthcare.

- **Initiating an Independent, External Audit of Scheduling Practices**

Acting Secretary Gibson has also directed that an independent, external audit of system-wide VHA scheduling practices be performed.

- **Sending Additional Frontline Team to Address Phoenix**

Following his trip to Phoenix VA Medical Center last week, Acting Secretary Gibson directed a VHA frontline team to travel to Phoenix to immediately address scheduling, access, and resource requirements needed to provide Veterans the timely, quality healthcare they deserve.

- **Utilizing High Performing Facilities to Help Those That Need Improvement**

VA will formalize a process in which high performing facilities provide direct assistance and share best practices with facilities that require improvement on particular medical center quality and efficiency, also known as

SAIL, performance measures.

- **Applying Immediate Access Reforms Announced in Phoenix to Most Challenged VA Facilities**

Last week, Acting Secretary Gibson announced a series of measures to address healthcare access problems in Phoenix. Today, Acting Secretary Gibson announced he'll apply the same reforms to facilities with the most access problems from the results of the audit, including:

- **Hiring Additional Clinical and Patient Support Staff**

VA will deploy teams of dedicated human resource employees to accelerate the hiring of additional, needed staff.

- **Employing New Staffing Measures**

VA's first goal is to get Veterans off wait lists and into clinics. VA is using temporary staffing measures, along with clinical and administrative support, to ensure these Veterans receive the care they have earned through their service.

- **Deploying Mobile Medical Units**

VA will send mobile medical units to facilities to immediately provide services to patients and Veterans awaiting care.

- **Providing More Care by Modifying Local Contract Operations**

VA will modify local contract operations to be able to offer more community-based care to Veterans waiting to be seen by a doctor.

- **Removing Senior Leadership Where Appropriate**

Where appropriate, VA will initiate the process of removing senior leaders. Acting Secretary Gibson is committed to using all authority at VA's disposal to enforce accountability among senior leaders.

- **Suspending Performance Awards**

VA has suspended all VHA senior executive performance awards for FY2014.

- **Future Travel**

Over the course of the next several weeks, Gibson will travel to a series of VA facilities across the country. He will hear directly from Veterans and employees about obstacles to providing timely, quality care and how VA can immediately address them.

National audit and patient access data available at www.va.gov/health/access-audit.asp.

HIGHLIGHTS



HIRING OUR HEROES[®]

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

2014 Hiring Our Heroes Veterans Event – Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 316TH ARMY RESERVE OPERATION SUSTAINMENT WARRIOR
The Navy Hanger, Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 64
3370 Wonnacott Ave, Joint Base MDL, NJ 08641
Monday, July 28, 2014

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS: 9:00AM - 11AM; 11:00AM - 1:00PM; 1:00PM - 3:00PM
HIRING FAIR: 9:00AM – 4:00PM

A University of Phoenix-sponsored Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair for all veterans, military members and spouses will be proudly hosted in conjunction with the 316th U.S. Army Reserve Operation Sustainment Warrior. This job fair is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS), the New Jersey Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, Goodwill Industries International, NBC News, and other local partners.

EMPLOYERS Must register for FREE at HiringOurHeroes.org	JOB SEEKERS Register for FREE at HiringOurHeroes.org to guarantee admission. Walk-ins welcome but space not guaranteed.
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Three workshops for veterans and other military job seekers that focuses on resume writing, tips for successfully navigating hiring fairs, military skill translation, and interviewing will start at 9:00AM, 11:00AM and 1:00PM. To register for the Hiring Our Heroes Employment Workshops, visit HiringOurHeroes.org.

For registration questions, please contact us at hiringourheroes@uschamber.com or call 202-463-5807.



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HIGHLIGHTS



US Family Health Care, a Tricare Prime option providing a civilian based managed care network, will be holding Question and Answer sessions to provide information for servicemembers and families.

USFHP pushes forward effective Jan. 1, 2014, and they are adding an extra benefit to their already robust benefit package! Eye glasses for \$0 to low cost. To hear more about USFHP and this added benefit, come to one of their upcoming information sessions listed below:

Fort Dix Housing Community Center
Bldg. 1134 Hemlock Street, JB-MDL
June 2 and 23 / 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

JB-MDL McGuire Library
2603 Tuskegee Airmen Ave, JB-MDL
June 16 / 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

**JB-MDL McGuire Housing
Jim Saxton Community Center**
3811 South Boiling Street, JBMDL
June 10 and 19 / 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

108th Wing Airmen & Family Readiness Office
3327 Charles Blvd, JB-MDL
June 25 / 1 to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Picatiny Arsenal Army Community Service
Bldg. 119, Dover, NJ
June 10
Contact Darrel Hutchinson at 646-354-0126

Pemberton Community Library
16 Broadway Street, Brownmills, NJ
June 30 / 12 to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Mount Laurel Library
100 Walt Whitman Ave, Mount Laurel, NJ
June 18 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

Camden County Veterans Affairs
3 Collier Dr., Lakeland Complex, Blackwood, NJ
June 2, 9, 16 and 23 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Wil Acosta at 646-300-1312

NJDMAVA Bldg
IASD Section,
101 Eggerts Crossing Road, Lawrenceville, NJ
June 16 / 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

177th Fighter Wing
Bldg. 229, 400 Langley Rd., Egg Harbor Twp, NJ
June 5 / 12 - 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

NJNG Jersey City Armory
678 Montgomery Street, Jersey City, NJ
June 5, 12, 19 and 26 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Darrel Hutchinson at 646-354-0126

NJNG Toms River Armory
1200 Whitesville Road, Toms Rive, NJ
June 5 / 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

NWS Earle
Bldg. C29, 201 Highway 34 South, Colts Neck, NJ
June 18 / 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Call 1-800-241-4848 option 3 or visit www.usfhp.net for more information.

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.

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