

[View in Web Browser](#)

November 22, 2023



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner



Veterans, family members, state and local officials attend the State Veterans Day ceremony at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial at Holmdel, NJ on November 11, 2023. [View images.](#)

Giving Thanks

Happy Thanksgiving!

I hope you are able to enjoy these next few days with loved ones, and know that I am truly grateful for the service and sacrifices of those who have served, and those who are currently serving.

A number of our military members, including our New Jersey National Guard, are currently serving overseas, and many are preparing to deploy in the coming months. To those away from home, and to the families of those away from home, you are in our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers.

United New Jersey Veterans

Just shy of two weeks ago, alongside Lieutenant Governor Way at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel, we made a big announcement for the modernization of DMAVA Veteran Services.

[Unite New Jersey Veterans](#) is a digital platform designed to empower frontline Veteran service providers to quickly and securely refer New Jersey Veterans to the resources and services they need. The platform will modernize the way Veterans are connected to assistance with benefits, employment, education, housing, and mental health programs.

DMAVA is currently in the on-boarding and training phase of implementing this program, with the plan to go live with referrals January 1, 2024. If you are a Veterans service provider, please click the following link to access more information as well as the registration page: nj.gov/military/veterans/unitenjveterans.

We look forward to this new way to support our Veteran Community in the months ahead, and once more, I wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving!

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



Featured Events

Sussex County
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NEW JERSEY SOS VETERANS
STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

Catholic Charities
Diocese of Paterson
Providing help - creating hope.

SUSSEX COUNTY
NEW JERSEY

Suicide Awareness Seminar

**Calling all of our Veterans and
Community Veteran Service Providers!**
Join Us to learn about community resources
available to our veterans in crisis.

**Presentations by Community Leaders
and the VA Suicide Community Engagement Team**

Tuesday, December 5th, 11:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
Sussex Community College at the PAC Atrium,
1 College Hill Road, Newton, NJ 07860
R.S.V.P. at seniorservices@sussex.nj.us
or 973-579-0555 ext . 1277

**YOUTH
CHALLENGE
ACADEMY**

THE STAFF AND CADETS OF THE NEW JERSEY YOUTH
CHALLENGE ACADEMY ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY FOR

CLASS 56

Friday, December 15, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

Lawrenceville Armory
151 Eggerts Crossing Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

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.

- December 1 | Sea Girt
[DMAVA Semi-Annual VSO Training Seminar](#)
- December 3 | Paramus
[Holiday Wreath Ceremony for Our Heroes](#)
- December 5 | Sussex Community College
[Suicide Awareness Seminar](#)
- December 7 | Bordentown
[Retirement / Transition Seminar](#)
- December 15 | Lawrenceville
[NJYCA Class 56 Graduation](#)
- December 16 | Toms River
[Survivor Outreach Services Holiday Party](#)

Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

Employee Spotlight



Noelle Lee-Turner

DMAVA welcomed their very own [Governor's Fellow](#), Noelle Lee-Turner on September 11, 2023. She joined DMAVA as part of our new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) office under the leadership of Chief Diversity Officer, Victoria Ragucci.

Before coming to DMAVA, Noelle worked as an admin and IT professional for an insurance brokerage in Edison, NJ. She recently made a pivot into the DEIB space in 2022 and is extremely passionate about the work that raises awareness, broadens perspective, moves the needle, and challenges societal inequitable "norms". Hear from her directly about her experience here at DMAVA so far below.

"Being chosen as DMAVA's Governor's Fellow to serve within their DEIB office is a great privilege and honor. I couldn't be more grateful for this opportunity and it has been an amazing one thus far. When people ask why DEIB for me, I always tell individuals that Diversity and Inclusion isn't a job for me, but it is my life. The implementation of diverse and inclusive practices directly affects how I and many others thrive or don't in professional settings and otherwise."



Gregory Policastro

"I'm here for the residents."

Gregory Policastro is a Patient Services Advocate for the residents at the [Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park](#).

Residents and their families can find Greg chatting with residents throughout the day all around the home along with his fellow advocates. He addresses resident services from food and drink, to housekeeping, and recreation.

His open door policy ensures that each resident has a voice and receives immediate action to any concerns they may have.

[Watch Video](#)

NJ National Guard



3-112th Field Artillery Regiment

During the Steel Battalion's Pre-mobilization Annual Training at Fort Barfoot, VA, the Battalion Staff conducted a Staff Exercise (STAFFEX) in order to further hone their skills on planning field artillery operations. The STAFFEX culminated with a Field Artillery Tactical Rehearsal over a terrain model.

The tactical rehearsal ensures that the Field Artillery Battalion operation plan or operation order is properly planned and tactical control, movement, and key sustainment operations are synchronized.



1-114th Infantry Regiment

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, [44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#), New Jersey Army National Guard, perform a mortar live-fire exercise at the Fort Dix Ranges on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ on November 14, 2023. The 44th IBCT conducted annual training in preparation for the unit's upcoming deployment.

[View Images](#)



1-114th Infantry Regiment

Soldiers with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, fire the M136 AT4 on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ on November 17, 2023. The AT4 is a 84mm, disposable, shoulder-fired recoilless unguided anti-tank weapon.

[View Images](#)



Republic of Cyprus

Minister of Defence Michalis Giorgallas, Republic of Cyprus, and Republic of Cyprus National Guardsmen took a tour of New Jersey National Guard facilities and the NYC skyline on July 19, 2023.

The Republic of Cyprus is a partner of the New Jersey National Guard in the U.S. Department of Defense [State Partnership Program](#).

[View Images](#)

Join Our Team

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



DMAVA Veterans Services



Acting Governor Way Announces “Unite New Jersey Veterans” Digital Platform to Modernize Veteran Services

November 11, 2023

HOLMDEL – During a Veterans Day ceremony today at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial in Holmdel, Acting Governor Tahesha Way announced the implementation phase of “Unite New Jersey Veterans” – a digital platform designed to empower frontline veteran service providers to quickly and securely refer New Jersey veterans to the resources and services they need. The platform will modernize the way veterans will be connected to assistance with benefits, employment, education, housing, and mental health programs.

“As we recognize Veterans Day, our Administration reaffirms its ongoing commitment to supporting New Jersey’s heroic veterans,” said Acting Governor Way. “Today, we announce the Unite New Jersey Veterans platform, which will launch on January 1, 2024 and connect service providers throughout New Jersey. Unite New Jersey Veterans will streamline the process for veterans and military families seeking access to the care and benefits they have earned.”

[Unite New Jersey Veterans](#) will enable hospitals, social service agencies, and other case managers to send and receive secure electronic referrals and records to help improve health outcomes and otherwise address the needs of veterans and their families through this shared technology platform.

Following a planning period in coordination with the New Jersey Office of Information Technology and Department of the Treasury, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is now beginning to on-board and train providers so that they can start using Unite New Jersey Veterans on January 1, 2024.

“The number of people and organizations wanting to help veterans inspires me daily,” said Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, Commissioner of

Military and Veterans Affairs and The Adjutant General of New Jersey. “This digital referral network is a way to further empower them in support of our heroes.”

The implementation of this secure digital platform was made possible through legislative support for a \$3 million state appropriation in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget Governor Phil Murphy signed earlier this year.

[Read Full News Release](#)



Jason Newman, Camden VSO

Jason Newman is the Veterans Service Officer (VSO) working in our newly opened office in Camden, NJ.

Prior to his tenure with DMAVA, Jason was employed by the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL). He started his career with DOL as a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, assisting Veterans with significant barriers to employment in all phases of the job search process. He also worked as a Veterans Business Representative, assisting companies to find qualified Veterans through the DOL pipeline for them to offer employment opportunities.

Jason had assisted Veterans even prior to his time with DOL. He was a Wounded Warrior Fellow in the Congressional office of Rob Andrews of the 1st District of NJ for 2 years, assisting Veterans with the claims process, burial benefits, and myriad other Veteran issues.

Jason is a 2015 graduate of Rutgers Camden, graduating with a B.A. in Political Science. He served in the U.S. Army from 2003-2006 as a combat infantryman, including one combat tour with the

1st Brigade, 25th Infantry, serving in Mosul, Iraq from 2004-2005. He is the recipient of the Combat Infantryman Badge, an Army Commendation Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. He is very happily married and the proud father of one and is a resident of Gloucester County.

Through his work, he strives to assist our Veterans in any way, shape or form, and looks forward to helping any Veteran that reaches out to him!

To contact Jason or one of his colleagues around the state, please visit our website at [Veterans Service Offices](#).



State Medal Ceremony

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs held a State Medal Ceremony at the Christian Faith Assembly Church in Hainesport, NJ on November 17, 2023.

[View Images](#)



State Medal Ceremony

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs held a State Medal Ceremony at the Brookdale Monroe Assisted Living Center in Monroe Township, NJ on November 13, 2023.

[View Images](#)



The New York Giants Foundation Visits Paramus

New York Giants Placekicker Graham Gano and The Giants Foundation had a team huddle with the residents at the [New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus](#) on November 17, 2023.

[View Images](#)

**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



NJYCA Director

In October 2023, Ryan Pope was selected to serve as Director for the New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy (NJYCA).

In this capacity he oversees academic offerings, counseling, medical services, service-to-community, staff training & professional development, religious services, assessments, mental health, and academic and community partnerships. In addition, he actively supports the Academy's strategic planning, recruiting, marketing and post-residential planning efforts.

Mr. Pope received a Master of the Arts in Organizational Development and Leadership with specialization in electronic learning and corporate training from the University of the Rockies in Denver, Colorado. He has been a Counselor/Teacher, Team Leader, Coordinator of Culture and Climate, Associate Director, and Director in a variety of different schools and programs.



National Guard Training Center

The Surf Kings Fishing Club, founded in 1960, held a fishing tournament on the beach at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt, NJ On November 18, 2023. The tournament has existed for about 26 years, and is a friendly and casual contest, in which the largest fish wins.

The [National Guard Training Center](#) was delighted to host anglers from across the state.



National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

The [National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey](#) hosted a movie showing of Sabaton's animated film, 'The War to End All Wars - The Movie' on November 17, 2023.

The event was a big hit with about 30 fans in attendance. Some were local, though we made some new friends as we had visitors travel in from New York and Pennsylvania. We were very excited to be a part of this project and want to thank the Sabaton team for including us.

NEW JERSEY
YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
 DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.



YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY


Now accepting applications for Class 57 - January 2024.

APPLY NOW!

TUITION FREE



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 (800) 997-5587 / (732) 974-6516
 rpm@dmava.nj.gov
 njyca.org/admissions



Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

DEIB Newsletter

State Partners



Mental Health Association in New Jersey

Jaime Angelini and Neal Stephens from the Mental Health Association in New Jersey were pleased to teach Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans and their Families at the SpectraCare Foundation and the Carlton R. Rouh Veterans Center in Lindenwold, NJ on November 8, 2023.

This project is an initiative of the [Governor’s Challenge](#) to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families and the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Image and caption courtesy of [MHANJ](#) and [Spectracare](#).



Morris County Medal Ceremony

As the Morris County Distinguished Military Service Medal program has grown in popularity, the Board of County Commissioners hosted two Veterans Day Observance ceremonies on November 8 and November 9 this year to publicly honor 28 local veterans, who were accompanied by family and friends.

[View Image Albums](#)

Information Needed from Morris County Veterans of the War in Afghanistan

With the approach of the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the War in Afghanistan in October 2026, the Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation is seeking soldiers and sailors interested in being listed in the [Veterans Compendium](#). Open to vets born in

Morris County or who lived in the county for a minimum of ten years. All branches of service welcome & photos are appreciated.



NJ State Agencies

- [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](#)
-



Federal Partners



**The Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season
Ends Jan. 1, 2024**

Check the DFAS Webpage for Important Deadlines and Eligibility Info

<https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>

Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season

Congress provided for a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Open Season in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. The SBP Open Season began on December 23, 2022 and ends on January 1, 2024.

The SBP Open Season allows for retirees receiving retired pay, eligible members, or former members awaiting retired pay who are currently NOT enrolled in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) to enroll.

The SBP Open Season also allows eligible members and former members who are currently enrolled in either SBP or RCSBP to permanently discontinue their SBP coverage.

[Learn More](#)

Benefits Open Season

Both TRICARE and Federal Benefits Open Seasons started on November 13th. If you want to enroll or make changes to your current plans, this is the time to do it.

Need more information? Visit tricare.mil/openseason, benefeds.com, or opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/open-season.

BENEFEDS is also hosting a [Virtual Benefits Fair](#) throughout Federal Benefits Open season to help you get the answers you need.

All WWII Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA health care and nursing home services

November 10, 2023

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA health care, medical services, and nursing home care.

All WWII Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are eligible under this expansion, regardless of their length of service or financial status. These Veterans will not have to pay copays, enrollment fees or monthly premiums.

VA is reaching out by phone and mail to encourage WWII Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA care to apply today. Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their health care needs.

[Read Full News Release](#)

Research Participation Opportunity

VA's National Center for PTSD and the *Coaching Into Care* program have partnered to study telephone coaching methods to help spouses and intimate partners of Veterans with untreated PTSD get their Veteran into mental health care. The study will provide free telephone coaching and, if assigned, access to online educational materials. Participants will be compensated up to \$170 for participating.

Visit familycoachingstudy.org to learn more about the study and complete a brief screening quiz to see if you are eligible to participate. For participant's rights questions, contact 1-866-680-2906.

National Parks Pass

There is a new lifetime pass for National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands, called America the Beautiful.

This lifetime pass for Gold Star Families & Veterans is being offered to demonstrate the country's immense gratitude and respect for those who have served and defended our country.

[Learn More at VA News](#)

VALife Insurance

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) provides guaranteed acceptance whole life coverage of up to \$40,000 to Veterans with service-connected disabilities. Lesser amounts are available in increments of \$10,000. Under this plan, the elected coverage takes effect two years after enrollment as long as premiums are paid during the two-year period.

All Veterans age 80 or under with a VA disability rating of 0 to 100% are eligible for the VALife program and have no time limit to apply.

[Learn More](#)



VA Disability - with Mike Figlioli, VFW Director of National Veterans Services

In this episode, theSITREP asks Mike Figlioli, VFW Director of National Veterans Services, about VA disability: what is it, how to apply, and more.

[theSITREP Podcast](#)

VA NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
11 Locations Serving 14 Counties

Community Outreach

Scott Dadaian
Community Outreach Specialist

201-587-5990 (Cell)

scott.dadaian@va.gov

For General Questions & Media Inquiries:

vanjhcscommsteam@va.gov

Find Us Online

www.va.gov/new-jersey-health-care/

VA New Jersey Health Care System

@vanjhcs

Featured Links

- [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 Women's Health Reengagement Training](#)
- [Free legal services for Veterans, service members](#)
- [VA Health and Benefits Mobile App](#)
- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
- [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#)
- [Million Veteran Program](#)

#VetResources

Subscribe to #VetResources to receive a weekly newsletter from the VA for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Subscribe

Community Spotlight



We Value Our Veterans Awards

New Jersey Acting Gov. Tahesha L. Way, Esq., left, and Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., right, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, presented the New Jersey Governor’s [We Value Our Veterans](#) Community, Academia, and Employer Awards during the State Veterans Day ceremony at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial at Holmdel, NJ on November 11, 2023.

The award recognizes communities, businesses, and academic institutions who honor the sacrifices, patriotism, and bravery of New Jersey’s service members. View images of the event at [DMAVA Flickr](#).

Community Award:

Mountainside Borough
Washington Township (Morris County)
Manchester Township

Employer Award:

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick
Virtua Health
Foley, Inc.

Academia Award:

Rowan College of South Jersey
Rider University



Military Services - Rowan University

We are so excited to unveil our new space for student veterans, military and ROTC on campus on November 8, 2023.

Image and caption courtesy [Military Services - Rowan University](#).



American Dream Mall

The American Dream Mall honored our veterans and their families with a complimentary day of fun on November 12, 2023. Treating our heroes to free access to the amazing amusement parks, water slides, and attractions shows tremendous gratitude and respect.

The New Jersey Army National Guard provided a color guard for the opening ceremonies.



VFW Post 5119

Thanksgiving dinner for [Veterans Haven North](#) residents was held on November 20, 2023 at the post hall.

The Glen Gardner Women's Club, the Spruce Run Memorial VFW Post 5119, the VFW Auxiliary, and friends hosted a fantastic dinner. This is the third year of a successful Thanksgiving event.

Image and caption courtesy [VFW Post 5119](#).



VFW Post 5343

Residents from the [Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland](#) enjoyed lunch, singing and dancing at VFW Post 5343 in Villas, NJ on November 14, 2023.

Thank you for the hospitality!



Bridging the Gap

Operation Suit Up is a program within [Bridging the Gap](#) that provides upscale professional attire for free to members of the military community on the path to a new career.

Retired Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike Ferrero explains how Operation Suit Up helps "Bridge the Gap" from military service to civilian careers.

[Watch Video](#)



Family Child Care Program is back, and growing!

The Department of the Air Force is reviving a special Family Child Care program (FCC).

Military families, or other families in our communities, can open their homes as a small business to military families in need of childcare. This includes drill weekends for Guard and Reserve members seeking childcare!

Oversight and restrictions apply, please contact Alicia Stasiulis at alicia.stasiulis.1@us.af.mil and (609) 562-2192 for details.

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.

November 23, 2003
Operation Enduring Freedom

**SSGT Thomas A.
Walkup Jr.**

U.S. Air Force
Millville, New Jersey

November 27, 2006
Operation Iraqi Freedom

**LCPL Michael A.
Schwarz**

U.S. Marine Corps
Carlstadt, New Jersey

November 23, 2003
Operation Enduring Freedom

MAJ Steven Plumhoff

U.S. Air Force
Neshanic Station, New Jersey

November 28, 2004
Operation Iraqi Freedom

PFC Stephen C. Benish

U.S. Army
Clark, New Jersey

November 24, 2005
Operation Iraqi Freedom

**PFC Ryan D.
Christensen**

U.S. Army
Spring Lake Heights, New Jersey

December 3, 2004
Operation Iraqi Freedom

**SPC David P.
Mahlenbrock**

U.S. Army
Maple Shade, New Jersey

November 26, 2012
Operation Enduring Freedom

**CPL Christopher M.
Monahan Jr.**

U.S. Marine Corps
Island Heights, New Jersey

December 4, 2007
Operation Iraqi Freedom

SGT Eric J. Hernandez

U.S. Army
Waldwick, 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



Air Force Ace Donald Strait with Governor Driscoll

November 27, 1777

New Jersey Militia General Philemon Dickinson led a force of 1,400 militiamen on a massive raid on Staten Island and captured 200 men of the Loyalist New Jersey Volunteers, most of them recently recruited in Bergen County.

November 30, 1776

British General William Howe, then in the process of driving the remnants of General George Washington's American Army out of New Jersey, optimistically advised Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for America, that he intended to decisively crush the rebellion in America in the forthcoming year. Needless to say, that prediction, as with many in war, did not work out.

November 30, 1967

December 5, 1944

Major Donald Strait, US Army Air Force, flying a P51 Mustang, shot down two German Focke-Wulf 190s, officially qualifying as an Ace. He ended the war with thirteen and a half kills. Born in East Orange in 1918, Strait was an enlisted man in the New Jersey National Guard's 119th Observation Squadron before the war, and one of only two prewar National Guardsmen to become Aces. Strait rejoined the New Jersey Air National Guard after the war and rose to the rank of major general before retiring in 1978.

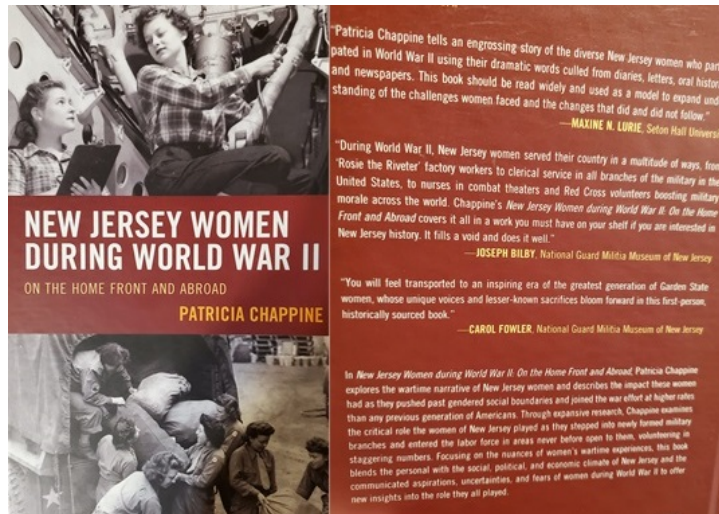
December 3, 1918

New Jersey National Guard Sergeant William O. Nicol of Jersey City was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism...in action near Verdun, France" while serving with Company A of the Twenty-ninth



Captain Eleanor Grace Alexander, a US Army nurse from River Vale, was killed in an aircraft crash near Qui Nhon while returning from a mission to Pleiku. She was the only New Jersey woman to die in the Vietnam War.

Division's 111th Machine-Gun Battalion. His citation noted that "Sergeant Nicol's section was caught in a hostile barrage, by which two of his men were killed and five wounded. Sergeant Nicol led the rest of the section to shelter and then returned under shell fire and rescued the wounded." Nicol, a Jersey City police officer in civilian life, retired from the New Jersey National Guard in 1947 as a major.



New Jersey Women during World War II: On the Home Front and Abroad

Patricia Chappine | Lexington Books | October 2023

Through expansive research, author Patricia Chappine examines the critical role the women of New Jersey played as they stepped into newly formed military branches and entered the labor force in areas never-before open to them, volunteering in staggering numbers.

The Veteran Oral History Project at the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey was used extensively by the author for its many [New Jersey WWII female participants](#).

Museum staff members Joseph Bilby and Carol Fowler provided book reviews for the jacket cover.

In The News



Serving Those Who Served: Jacob Kopach advocates for the mental health of fellow Rutgers-Camden veterans

Christina Lynn | Rutgers.edu | November 10, 2023

United States Marine Corps veteran Jacob Kopach's life of service to fellow vets started with a combat wound. The injury forced an abrupt end to his military career, transitioning him into civilian re-entry and an academic journey at Rutgers-Camden. He is now part of an on-campus team connecting student veterans to benefits, resources, and programs as he studies for his master's degree in social work.

Kopach spent four years in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Lance Corporal or E3 infantry rifleman and later as an infantry squad leader of a rifle squad with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The 24th MEU provided crisis response to areas in Jordan, Oman, and Yemen, where, during the Yemeni civil war of 2015, Kopach's task force assisted with the evacuation of key U.S. personnel.

While deployed overseas, Kopach was wounded in combat. He was brought to Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Lejeune, which helps Marines either return to service or transition to civilian life. It was there that Kopach learned of Veteran Readiness and Employment (or Chapter 31) benefits, which would enable him to pursue higher education. He qualified for medical retirement from the military in early 2017.

[Read Full Story](#)



Leadership Somerset Project Provides Garden to Local Veterans

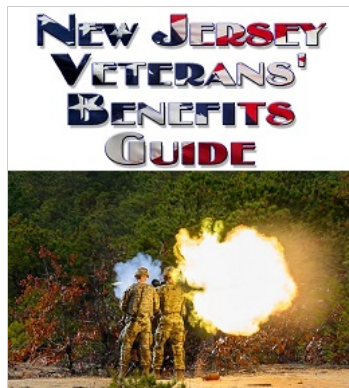
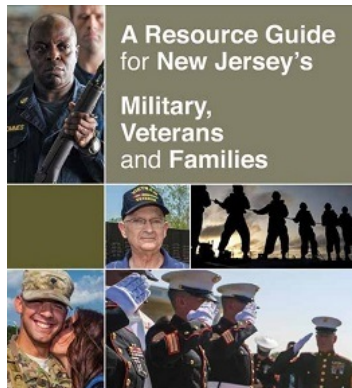
November 15, 2023

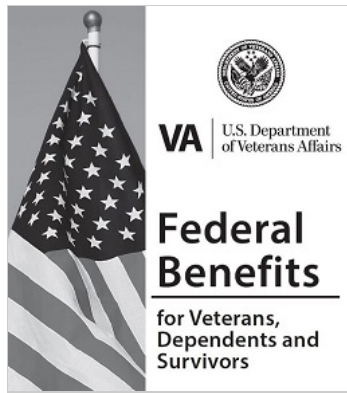
BASKING RIDGE, NJ - Members of the 2023 Leadership Somerset graduating class celebrated Veterans Day with a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Veterans Garden Project at the Valley Brook Village Veterans community at the Lyons VA Medical Center. Resident veterans, partner organizations, donors, Somerset County officials, and the Leadership Somerset team all attended the celebration.

“As a veteran myself, I’m proud of the entire Leadership Somerset 2023 class for supporting the veteran community in Somerset County with this project,” said program graduate Vincent Barragan. “Leadership Somerset is a great program that helps participants build the skills and relationships to serve underserved communities with projects like the Veterans Garden, and to work collaboratively with partners like Northeast Organic Farming Association and Empower Somerset.”

[Read Full Story](#)

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



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.