

JANUARY 25, 2023



READY TO SERVE ★ PROUD TO HAVE SERVED

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



NJYCA Class 55

We are excited to share that on Monday, January 23, 2023 we welcomed our 55th Class to the NJ Youth ChalleNGe Academy.

The Mission of the New Jersey Youth ChalleNGe Academy (NJYCA), which is located at the NJ National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt, is to train and mentor disengaged teenage youth so they become responsible and productive citizens of their community, state, and country. We will do so by providing unique transformational experiences through a highly disciplined 22-week residential program that integrates a quasi-military training environment, innovative academic offerings, and opportunities to further develop their physical, social, and intellectual abilities. In partnership with a mentor, they will receive continued guidance and support during their one-year post residential phase immediately following graduation.

On January 23rd, 63 Candidates (51 males and 12 females) walked through our doors and took the first steps to change their lives for the better.

During the residential phase of the program all cadets will be educated and trained in Eight Core Components. All cadets must demonstrate mastery in each of the following to successfully complete the program: Academic Excellence, Life Coping Skills, Job Skills, Health & Hygiene, Responsible Citizenship, Service to the Community, Leadership/Followership, and Physical Fitness.

For the next 22 weeks, Cadets will wake up at 5am and be in bed by 9pm. They will participate in military style physical fitness training as well as Drill & Ceremony exercises. They will be expected to maintain their living space and personal appearance to military standards. They will do all of this in a military style uniform and without cell phones or most of their personal items!

We wish Class 55 much luck over the next 5.5 months. We know each of these young men and women will be successful and we look forward to watching all 63 of them walk across the graduation stage on Thursday, June 22, 2023.

Interested in following Class 55 on their Journey? Check out their website at njyca.org for links to their social media and subscription

link to their newsletter - *The Bridge*.

Class 56 will begin on July 17, 2023. Know someone who is interested? The application process is now open. Refer to [NJYCA Admissions](#) to learn about the eligibility requirements as well as obtain the pre-application form.

Thank you for what you do every day in service to our Veterans, military personnel and their families.

We encourage 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



DMAVA EVENTS

VETERAN INFORMATION SESSION

The Wilmington VA Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Outreach Specialist will be hosting a presentation on information regarding enrollment, eligibility, services, and programs offered by the Sessions offer general information and how to navigate VA. Q & A and one-on-one information will be provided for all Veterans, their families, and caregivers in attendance.

Please contact the VA Outreach Specialist a VA provider or staff member if you would like to attend. (Seating is limited and based on availability)

UPCOMING SESSIONS

4th Thursday of every month

11:00 AM

(or scheduled by request with Outreach Specialist)

WHERE

Atlantic County CBOC
1909 New Road
Northfield, NJ 08225



VA OUTREACH SPECIALIST
Jacqueline Hinker
302-304-5509

CLINIC STAFF
PACT Team
Nurse Manager
Behavior Health
AMSA Supervisor
AMSA

VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

CONTACTED BY PHONE

DMAVA will have a Veterans Service Officer present



January 26, 2023
11:00am - 3:00pm

DMAVA VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Paramus Park Mall
Center Court

700 Paramus Park

Paramus, NJ 07652

DMAVA will have a Veterans Service Officer present to help and assist any Veteran or family member.

For more information contact the Veterans Benefits Bureau at vbb@dmava.nj.gov.

FRIDAY
JAN. 27, 2023

COMMUNITY EVENT

11 a.m. -
3 p.m.

COMMUNITY & VETERAN WELLNESS AND RESOURCE FAIR

The Wilmington VA Medical Center in partnership with the State of New Jersey and Cape May County service organizations, welcomes ALL to attend this day of resources. The event will be held on the Cape May Court House Campus of Atlantic Cape Community College.

There will be briefings throughout the course of the event, to include:

Department of Veterans Affairs - PACT Act
Department of Labor
Cape May County Human Services/Cape May County Veteran Services
Cape May County Prosecutors Office/Hope One
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



DMAVA will have a Veterans Service Officer present



FIRST AID/CPR/AED CERTIFICATION

for infants, children, and adults

TRAINING DATES

4 DEC | 5 FEB | 30 APR | 4 JUN

Sundays | 9:30 am-3:30pm
Bordentown Armory

Two-year Certification Upon Completion

DOES NOT INCLUDE BLS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

**FREE | OPEN TO MILITARY FAMILIES AND CYP
VOLUNTEERS | AGES 13 & UP**

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!



SCAN TO REGISTER



For more information contact the Child & Youth Coordinators
Kimberly Jordan | 609-496-9260 | kimberly.n.jordan2.ctr@army.mil
Melissa Nicolato | 609-496-9261 | melissa.k.nicolato.ctr@army.mil



February 6, 2023
5:30pm - 7:30pm

QUARTERLY WOMEN'S OPEN FORUM

Westfield Armory

500 Rahway Ave
Westfield, NJ 07090

All New Jersey National Guard (Army & Air) Personnel
& DMAVA Employees

[Learn More and RSVP](#)

FEATURED EVENTS



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
New Jersey Health Care System

PACT ACT ENROLLMENT EVENT

Presentation
Eligibility & Enrollment
Toxic Exposure Screenings
VBA Claims Clinic

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023

CHOOSE YOUR TIME:
3:00-4:00PM 4:00-5:00PM
5:00-6:00PM 6:00-7:00PM

VANJHCS LYONS CAMPUS
BUILDING 143, MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
151 KNOLLCROFT ROAD
LYONS, NJ 07939

Not enrolled in VA health care?
Bring your DD214 and a completed 10-10EZ and enroll on the spot...get screened and start a claim!
Applying for PACT Act benefits will not automatically impact your current benefits. Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition will not have their previously awarded claims re-adjudicated simply because they file for new benefits under the PACT Act.



THE 2022 PACT ACT
DID YOU SERVE THE PERSIAN GULF, IRAQ OR AFGHANISTAN?



THE 2022 PACT ACT
WERE YOU STATIONED AT CAMP LEJUNE, FROM 1952-1967?
VIETNAM VETERAN
DID YOU SERVE IN VIETNAM?

Register Here!
Choose your time & email
VANJHCSCommsTeam@va.gov



Save the Date!
PACT Act "On the Road" Events
February 18, 2023
James J. Howard, Back Clinic
February 25, 2023
Hickman, Clinic
More dates to follow!

**SEA GIRT
PATRIOT POLAR PLUNGE**



2023

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

PRESENTED BY SEA GIRT RECREATION
Saturday, Feb. 4th 2023, 10:30 AM
 To Benefit the LIFT Fund for Veterans at Coastal Habitat for Humanity
 Custom Hoodie Sweatshirt & After-Party with Breakfast Buffet at Rod's Tavern
 \$40 Donation, \$50 after Dec. 31st. Pre-Register by 1/25 to receive Hoodie.




In Honor of State Trooper & National Guardsman, Juan Fajardo







To sponsor or make a donation
please contact:
recreation@seagirtbozo.com or
ksambades@coastalhabitat.org

Register or Donate Today:
www.seagirt5k.com



PLUNGE LOCATION:
Beacon Blvd. Beach,
Sea Girt, NJ 08750



UPCOMING EVENTS

DMAVA & Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

DMAVA VETERANS SERVICES



New DCVA Vincent Solomeno

Effective January 13, 2023, Vincent Solomeno assumed the duties and responsibilities as the acting Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs (DCVA)

Solomeno previously served as the Superintendent of the National Guard Training Center, Sea Girt, where he managed an installation and facilitated the training environment for the New Jersey National Guard, State Police, Department of Corrections, Division of Criminal Justice, and the Juvenile Justice Commission.

Prior to that, he served as Executive Officer to The Adjutant General and Commissioner of Military and Veterans Affairs. He is co-author of the 2019 *Resource Guide for New Jersey Military, Veterans, and Families*.

In a statement to the DMAVA workforce, Brigadier General Lisa J. Hou, D.O., the Adjutant General and Commissioner commented that "At a time when our priority is the welfare of the Veterans, Veterans Spouses, and Gold Star Families entrusted to our care, Vincent possesses the skills and experience to decisively meet that objective."

A U.S. Army Veteran, Solomeno is a Distinguished Military Graduate of the University of Scranton. He commissioned as a Corps of Engineers Second Lieutenant in 2007. In 2010, he transferred to the New Jersey Army National Guard. In addition to his overseas service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, he served on active duty during Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, and as an operations officer for the National Guard's statewide COVID-19 response. He currently holds the rank of Major and is the recipient of the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal.

In addition to his Bachelor of Science from the University of Scranton, Solomeno earned his Master of Arts from the University of Amsterdam. He is the recipient of the prestigious Truman Scholarship and Fulbright Fellowship.

Solomeno is a life member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Guard Association of the United States. He serves on the Board of Trustees of the American Legion Jersey Boys State Program and the New Jersey Civil War Heritage Association.



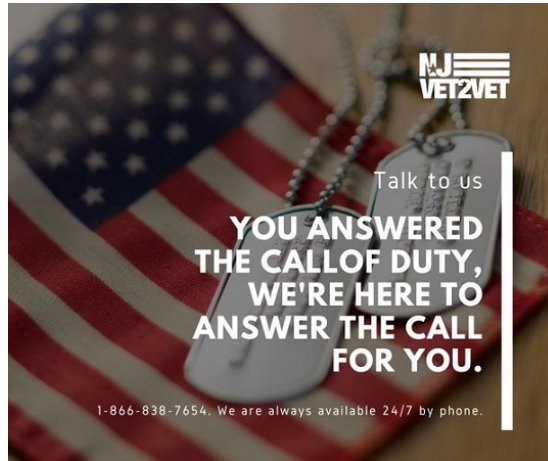
MLK Day of Service

U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., The Adjutant General of New Jersey (second from right), Senator Joseph Vitale, Chair, Senate Health Committee (third from right), Senator Joseph Cryan, Chair, Senate Military And Veteran Affairs Committee (second from left) and Vincent Solomeno, Acting Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs (left) visited the [Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home](#) in Edison, New Jersey and met with residents during a Martin Luther King Day of Service on Jan. 16, 2023.

The [New Jersey Veterans Home at Paramus](#) and the [New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland](#) also held a day of service in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The special observances were designed to inspire reflection on the spirit of volunteerism and service to others in the wake of King's legacy. Participants included homes' leadership, staff, and residents along with leaders from Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans and Vietnam Veterans of America.

[View Images](#)



NJ Veterans' Benefits Hotline

888-865-8387

vbb@dmava.nj.gov

[Veterans Outreach Schedule](#)

[Veterans Service Offices](#)

NJ NATIONAL GUARD



Hoist Training

New Jersey National Guard crew chiefs, with the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, partner with our 1-171st General Support Aviation Battalion (MEDEVAC) to conduct hoist training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, Jan. 5, 2023.

[View Images](#)



Florida Bound

F-16 Fighting Falcons took off last week from the 177th Fighter Wing to travel to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., to participate in the Weapons System Evaluation Program, where they will test air-to-air, live-fire weapons.

[View Images](#)

Join Our Team

100% Free College Tuition

Bonuses up to \$20,000

Student Loan Repayment



DMAVA DEPARTMENTS



New Assignment

On January 11, 2023, the headquarters staff at the Lawrenceville campus said “goodbye” to Maj. Gyasi Mann as he will be taking on a new role as the Bilateral Affairs Officer for the Cyprus State Partnership Program.

January 2023 Volume 8 - Issue 1

NJARNG Sustainability Newsletter
In collaboration with Rowan University

Clean Cut Quarterly

BIM
Building Information Modeling

Clean Cut Quarterly

The *Clean Cut Quarterly* is the New Jersey Army National Guard's Sustainability Newsletter in collaboration with [The Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering at Rowan University](#). The latest issue is now available.

[Current Issue and Archives](#)

NEW JERSEY
YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

Now accepting applications for Class 56 - July 17, 2023.

APPLY NOW!

TUITION FREE

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

STATE PARTNERS

ANCHOR
AFFORDABLE NJ COMMUNITIES FOR HOMEOWNERS & RENTERS

HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
 \$1,500 FOR HOMEOWNERS EARNING \$150K OR LESS
 \$1,000 FOR HOMEOWNERS EARNING ~\$150 - 250K
 \$450 FOR RENTERS EARNING \$150K OR LESS
*This year's benefit is based on residential status as of Oct. 1, 2019.

Apply Today!
NJ.GOV/TREASURY/TAXATION/ANCHOR

RENTERS WHOSE UNITS ARE UNDER A PILOT AGREEMENT ARE NOW ELIGIBLE!
*PILOT - Payment in Lieu of Taxes

DEADLINE TO APPLY: Feb 28, 2023

DEADLINE EXTENDED

NEW

NEEDED: Volunteer Veteran Mentors!

Help a Fellow Veteran Undergoing Life-Changing Rehabilitation, Counseling and Treatment!

The Cape May County Prosecutors Office operates a Veterans Diversion Program (VDP) which offers Veterans charged with crimes an alternative to trial and sentencing. The program offers Veterans treatment and assistance for mental health, substance abuse and other issues which may have contributed to their arrest and criminal charges.

Instead of Incarceration, the program helps Veterans with:

- Treatment and Rehabilitation
- Community services and assistance
- Veterans Affairs counseling and benefits
- Mentoring support & coaching

VETERAN MENTORS are a vital part of the program, offering a frontline source of guidance and support for the participants...and MORE are needed in our community!



**ARE YOU READY TO
LEND A FELLOW VET A
HELPING HAND?**

PLEASE CONTACT:

David L. Shutter
SPC-4, US ARMY – LCDR, USNR
VFW-386, Cape May, NJ

Veteran Diversion Program Coordinator
Cape May County Prosecutors Office

dshutter@cmcpfos.net
609-465-1135



OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR County of Atlantic

WILLIAM E. REYNOLDS
Atlantic County Prosecutor

4997 Unami Boulevard, Suite 2
P.O. Box 2062
Mays Landing, NJ 08330
609-909-7800 – Fax 609-909-7802

ERIK M. BERGMAN

First Assistant Prosecutor

RICHARD E. McKELVEY

Executive Assistant Prosecutor

MARIO C. FORMICA

Chief Counsel to the Prosecutor



BRUCE K. DESHIELDS

Chief of County Detectors

PATRICK F. SNYDER

Acting Deputy Chief of Detectors

RAYMOND G. ROYSTER

Director of Community Outreach

ATTENTION VETERANS, FAMILY MEMBERS and SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Veterans Diversion Program is available to certain veterans of the armed services who have pending non-violent criminal charges in Superior Court.

ACPO is seeking veterans willing to serve as VOLUNTEER MENTORS to become trained by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in working with fellow veterans through the diversion process.

For more information, please contact Detective Chris Southard at southard_c@acpo.org / (609) 909-7965, Detective Hannah Piatt at piatt_h@acpo.org/609-909-7859, or Executive Assistant Prosecutor Rick McKelvey at mckelvey_r@acpo.org / (609) 909-7722.

Defendants who have served and are currently pending criminal charges in Superior Court should consult with their attorney or visit <https://www.acpo.org/resource-page/55>.



NJ State Agencies

- [Vote For Valor](#)
- [Career Connections for Veterans](#)
- [Tax Resources for Military/Veterans](#)
- [Educator Certification for Military Spouses and 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



Suicide Prevention

WASHINGTON – Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.

This expansion of care will help prevent Veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to Veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA.

[Read Full News Release](#)



New Airborne Hazards and Open Pit Registry Data

Recently, VA launched a new webpage that shows the number of [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry \(AHOBPR\) participants by state and congressional district](#).

The current webpage contains breakouts as of Sept. 12, 2022, for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five other jurisdictions (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, United States Virgin Islands and Northern Mariana Islands). The data will be updated biannually.

Section 808(b)(2) of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT Act) requires VA to make information public about the number of participants in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR) by State and congressional district.

Learn more about the [PACT Act](#).

**IMPORTANT
NEWS**

**Survivor Benefit Plan
OPEN SEASON**



The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2023 includes a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Open Season. The SBP Open Season began on Dec. 23, 2022 and ends on Jan. 1, 2024.

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Proposed Open Season

Congress provided for a Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). 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](#)



Scholarships for Military Children

Children of military families can now apply for one of the 500 Defense Commissary Agency \$2,000 scholarships for the 2023-2024 academic year. The Scholarships for Military Children Program was created to recognize the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community.

The deadline to submit an online application is Feb. 15, 2023.

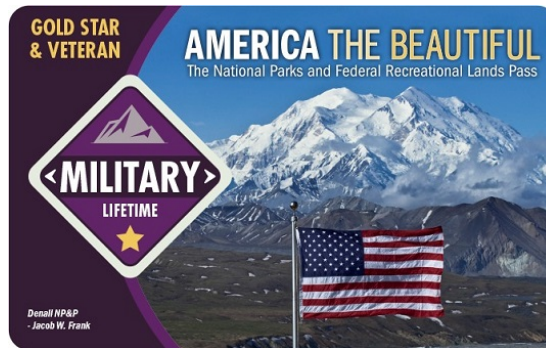
[Learn More](#)



Schedule Your PACT Act Event

If your Veterans Service Office, university/college or community organization would like to host the VA New Jersey Health Care System (VANJHCS), they will bring the information, screeners and

staff to you and your Veterans. Contact them at VANJHCSCommsTeam@va.gov to schedule your PACT Act event.



New National Parks Pass

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

This new 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.

The Interagency Military Pass has been part of the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Series since 2012. On December 27, 2021, President Biden signed into law S. 1605 “The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022” (NDAA). Section 641 of the NDAA makes Gold Star families and Veterans eligible for lifetime passes to federal recreational lands.

[Learn More at VA News](#)



VA Life

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](#)

Featured Links

- [Download VA Benefit Letters](#)
- [Podcasts on Veterans' Issues](#)
- [VA and FCC make it easier for Veterans to get internet access](#)
- [13 places that offer free wills or trusts for Veterans](#)
- [Fast facts about new toxic exposure screening for Veterans](#)
- [Simplifying the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill application process](#)
- [Free legal services for Veterans, service members](#)
- [VA Health and Benefits Mobile App - six essential facts](#)
- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
- [Preserve Your Loved Ones Story with Veterans Legacy Memorial](#)



The Women Veterans Call Center is **your** guide to VA.

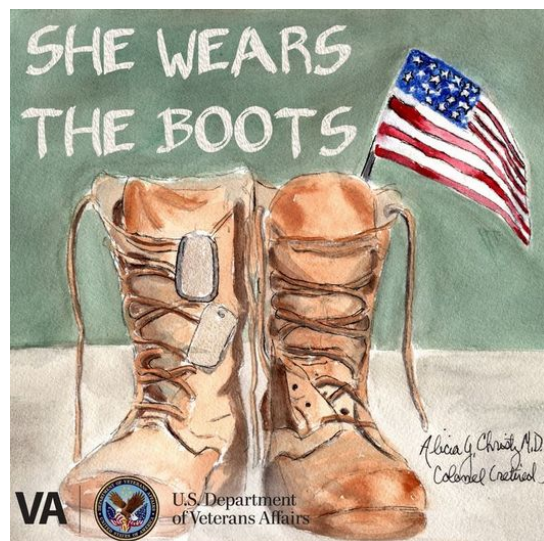
 **CALL**  **TEXT**  **CHAT ONLINE**

855-829-6636

WE ARE OPEN

Weekdays: 8:00 am–10:00 pm ET **Saturday:** 8:00 am–6:30 pm ET

PODCAST



LISTEN TO PTSD BYTES

A VA PODCAST



#VetResources

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

[Subscribe](#)

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Veteran Transitional Housing

Vetnetwork is proud to announce our partnership with [Lacey United Methodist Church](#) as we introduce our Veteran transitional housing program, Mount Zion!

At Mount Zion, Vetnetwork is able to provide a safe space for Veterans to lay their heads as they transition to a more secure housing situation through the VA or other programs. This is a first for us here in Ocean County and we have been very lucky to have such wonderful support from our friends at Lacey United Methodist Church and their parishioners.

[View Facebook Post](#)

VETERAN SUPPORT ORGS

NJ REENTRY CORPORATION

Veterans Outreach Services

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Veterans Emergency and At-Risk Housing
- Addiction Detox and Treatment
- Mental Health/Medical Services
- Medicaid (Hospital /Prescription Drugs)
- Case Management of Comprehensive Veterans' Services
- SNAP (food stamps)/General Assistance
- ID/Driver's License/DD214 Applications
- Bus Tickets/Transportation
- Housing Referrals
- Employment Training and Placement
- Work with Allied Veterans to coordinate New Jersey and VA benefits
- NJRC refers Veterans to VA Medical Centers and Behavioral Health Clinics
- NJRC partners with National Veterans Legal Services Program
- NJRC helps Veterans with upgrades of less than honorable discharge status and other legal needs

For more information, please contact
Sharon McGreevey
201.252.7641

**"OUR VETERANS HAVE SERVED THE NATION,
LET US NOW SERVE OUR VETERANS" - NJRC**

Partners:

SOLDIER ON

SSVF Program SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

The Soldier On SSVF program assists veterans and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

We provide:

- Case management
- Referral services
- Temporary financial assistance

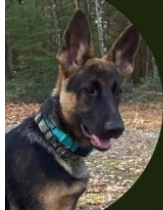
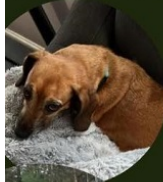
If you know of a veteran who is homeless, or struggling with issues related to housing, please send them our way!

Call us for more information:
1-866-406-8449



WE'RE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

If you are a veteran or a first responder suffering from PTSD and in need of an emotional support dog, please apply today or contact us for more information



Operation K9 Beethoven
501(c)(3) NJ Non-profit Organization
EIN: 87-1417235
Telephone: 201-986-1111
Email: k9beethoven@yahoo.com
FB: Operation K9 Beethoven
Insta: operation_k9_beethoven
www.operationk9beethoven.com

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.

January 26, 2005
Operation Iraqi Freedom
Cpl Sean P. Kelly
U.S. Marine Corps
Pitman, New Jersey

February 3, 2004
Operation Iraqi Freedom
SGT Stephen R. Sherman
U.S. Army
Neptune, New Jersey

January 31, 2005
Operation Iraqi Freedom
LCpl Harry R. Swain IV
U.S. Marine Corps
Cumberland, New Jersey

February 3, 2004
Operation Iraqi Freedom
2LT Seth J. Dvorin
U.S. Army
East Brunswick, New Jersey

February 1, 2011
Operation Enduring Freedom
SPC Ryan A. Gartner
U.S. Army
Dumont, New Jersey

February 7, 2007
Operation Iraqi Freedom
Cpl Thomas E. Saba
U.S. Marine Corps
Toms River, 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

VETERANS' ORAL HISTORIES



Kenneth Falls
Desert Storm



Robert Ferrone
Desert Storm

Veterans History Project

HISTORY



Nurses sworn into the NJ National Guard in 1957

January 25, 1844

February 1, 1977

George Ashby was born in Burlington. Ashby, an African-American, served in the Forty-fifth United States Colored Infantry regiment during the Civil War from 1864 to 1865, rising from private to first sergeant. When he died in Allentown, on April 26, 1946, Ashby was the last surviving New Jersey Civil War veteran.

January 25, 1942

Varanger, a Norwegian tanker sailing from Curacao to New York City with 12,750 tons of fuel oil, was torpedoed by a German submarine at 3:00 AM twenty-eight miles off Atlantic City. Hit by three torpedoes, Varanger split into three pieces, but all hands escaped in life boats. The crew was rescued by two fishing boats and brought to the US Coast Guard station at Sea Island Inlet, arriving there at 12:45 PM.

January 29, 1957

The New Jersey National Guard ceased to be an all-male organization when the first women soldiers in its history, two nurses, Captain Frances R. Comstock and 1st Lieutenant Lucille Valentino of Paterson, were sworn in as members of the 114th Mobile Surgical Hospital.

January 29, 1833

Alexander Arsace Vandoni was born in Italy. Vandoni emigrated to America in 1841, eventually settling in Chatham as a self-employed broom maker. In 1862 he enlisted as a musician in the Twenty-seventh New Jersey Infantry. After campaigns in Virginia and Kentucky, Vandoni was discharged with his regiment in 1863, and returned to Chatham as one of a relatively small number of Italian-American Civil War veterans. He died on February 29, 1908 and is buried in Florham Park.

A British force skirmished with New Jersey militiamen at Drake's Farm, near Springfield, as the "forage war" between the British seeking supplies in the countryside and the local militia heated up.

February 1, 1865

New Jersey governor Joel Parker presented New Brunswick native Captain Charles Stewart Boggs with a presentation sword in recognition of Boggs' heroic actions commanding the gunboat Varuna in the naval battles leading to the capture of New Orleans in April, 1862. Boggs sank six Confederate gunboats before his own ship began to sink, then ran Varuna into shore, tied her up to some trees and kept firing on the enemy.

February 3, 1943

The troop ship SSAT Dorchester, with 904 men aboard, was torpedoed off Greenland. Four chaplains - one Jewish, two Protestant and one Catholic - gave their lifejackets to soldiers, joined arms, said prayers and went down with the ship. There were 230 survivors. The Catholic chaplain, Father John Washington, born in Newark in 1908, was a graduate of Seton Hall University and Darlington Seminary and assigned to St. Stephen's parish in Kearny when he enlisted in the Army. The chaplains were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. There is a monument to Father Washington at Saint Rose of Lima Church, his home parish, on Orange Street in Newark and another to all four chaplains at St. Stephen's.



RevolutionNJ
1776 • 2026 | ENGAGE THE PAST. SHAPE THE FUTURE.

RevolutionNJ's New Website

The RevolutionNJ website is now active! It launched on November 30th and will continue to add information and photos over time. The website will be the location for all things related to RevolutionNJ around the state. Check out the [new website!](#)

Volunteers Needed For RevolutionNJ!

What is RevolutionNJ?



RevolutionNJ is a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission and the non-profit organization Crossroads of the American Revolution to plan the commemoration of the anniversary of the founding of the United States in New Jersey



We need help with:

- Historical Interpretation
- Archiving
- Record Keeping
- Guest Relations
- Gardening
- Education
- Research

JOIN US!
BE A PART OF A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION COMMEMORATION FOR THE 250TH FOUNDING OF AMERICA

908-783-7836



TO REGISTER: SCAN BELOW



MORE INFORMATION
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NJS NEW JERSEY STUDIES

An Interdisciplinary Journal

New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal is a project of the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Libraries, and Monmouth University.

The Journal publishes original scholarship on all aspects of NJ studies, including military history.

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DID YOU KNOW?



Meritorious Service Medal

On January 16, 1969, President Johnson established the Meritorious Service Medal per Executive Order No. 11448. The Executive Order was amended by President Reagan per Executive Order 12312, dated 2 July 1981, to authorize award to members of the armed forces of friendly foreign nations.

The MSM is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the

United States who distinguished themselves by outstanding non-combat meritorious achievement or service to the United States subsequent to January 16, 1969, normally, the acts or services rendered must be comparable to that required for the Legion of Merit but in a duty of lesser though considerable responsibility.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Staff Sergeant Keith Lee

Courtesy Story | 108th Wing Public Affairs | January 18, 2023

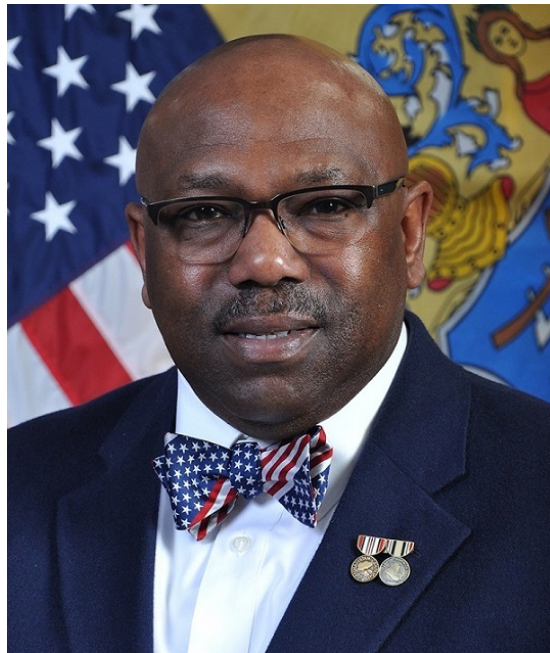
Staff Sgt. Keith Lee, an aircraft metals technology craftsman recently used his skills for the 108th Wing to save thousands of dollars to install a Global Aircrew Strategic Network Terminal (Global ASNT) in its command post, Jan. 17, 2023.

The talented Air National Guardsmen assigned to the 108th Maintenance Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J, took on this task with years of experience behind him.

While his aircraft fabrication skills were honed in the Guard, Lee's construction talents were developed during his teenage years. In high school Lee designed his own 3-axis computerized numerical control milling machine which sparked his interest in fabrication, and ultimately led him to join the Air National Guard and to the 108th machine shop.

[Read Full Story](#)

RETIREE SPOTLIGHT



COL (Ret.) Walter Nall

Effective January 13, 2023, Colonel (Ret.) Walter R. Nall transitioned out of his role as acting Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs (DCVA).

In addition to his service in the New Jersey Army National Guard, Colonel (Ret.) Nall is one of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' longest serving employees. Over the course of twenty-eight years, Walter provided leadership to the New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy, Veterans Haven South, the Division of Veterans Services, and since 2020, as acting Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs.

Nall is a U.S. Army Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

On a personal note, Brigadier General Hou stated that "Walter has been my battle buddy since before the start of my tenure. I will miss his intelligence, sense of humor, and commitment to our shared mission. I wish him and his wife Dorinda all the best upon his retirement."

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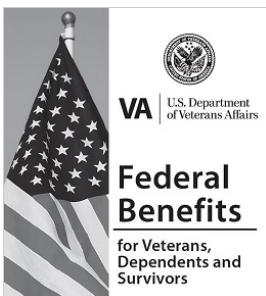
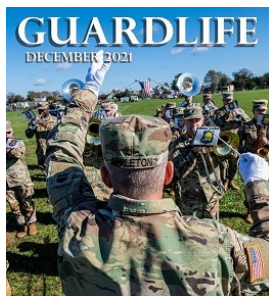
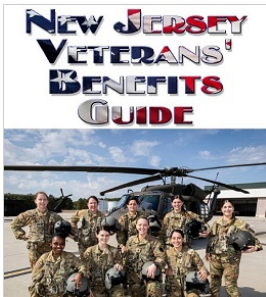
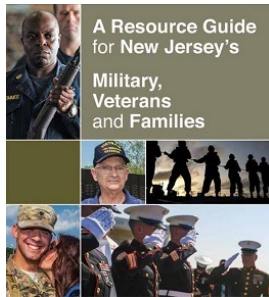
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We Are Hiring!

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.

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