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[Air Guard](#)
[Veterans](#)
[Administration](#)
[Leadership](#)
[Youth Challenge](#)
[Sitemap](#)

DMAVA Highlights Archives

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NJ Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs

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We're on the Web!
www.state.nj.us/military

**"Winter tames man,
 woman, and beast."**

..William Shakespeare

**Groundhog Day -
 Monday, 2 Feb 04**

Will Punxsutawney Phil see his shadow? Shadow - 6 more weeks of winter No Shadow - an early spring.

Tricky Tongue Twisters

New Law updates Soldiers & Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940.

On December 19, 2003, President Bush signed the "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act," new legislation that updates and expands all military members' important financial and legal rights as they enter active duty or are deployed to new duty stations. Authored by Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman, Congressman Chris Smith, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) updates and strengthens current civil protections enacted during World War II.

The SCRA provides a wide range of protections and is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations to enable service members to devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on family members of those deployed servicemembers. A few examples of such obligations you may expect to be protected against are:

- Outstanding credit card debt
- Mortgage payments
- Pending trials
- Taxes
- Terminations of lease

In addition, the new law:

- Expands current law that protects service members and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to nonpayment of rents that are \$1,200 per month or less. Under the new provisions this protection would be significantly updated to meet today's higher cost of living – covering housing leases up to \$2,400 per month – and then be adjusted annually to account for inflation.
- Provides a servicemember who receives permanent change of station orders or who is deployed to a new location for 90 days or more the right to terminate a housing lease.
- Clarifies and restates existing law that limits to 6% interest on credit card obligations, including credit card debt, for active duty servicemembers. The SCRA unambiguously states that no interest above 6% can accrue for credit obligations while on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the servicemember leaves active duty – instead that portion above 6% is permanently forgiven. Furthermore, the monthly payment must be reduced by the amount of interest saved during the covered period.
- Updates life insurance protections provided to activated Guard and Reserve members by increasing from \$10,000 to \$250,000 the maximum policy coverage that the federal government will protect from default for nonpayment while on active duty.
- Prevents servicemembers from a form of double taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state

Betty and Bob brought back blue balloons from the big bazaar.

Strict, strong, stingy Stephen Stretch slickly snared six sickly silky snakes.

Sure the ship's shipshape sir.

A three-toed tree toad loved a two-toed he-toad that lived in a too-tall tree.

January is National Mentoring Month...



"To the world you might be just one person, but to one person you just might be the world."

Visit the National Mentoring Association website for further information.

www.mentoring-association.org

other than the state in which they maintain their permanent legal residence. SCRA will prevent states from using the income earned by a servicemember in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

The SCRA covers all active duty service members, Reservists, and members of the National Guard while on active duty. The protection begins on the date of entering active duty and generally terminates within 30-90 days after the date of discharge from active duty. For the complete text of the new law and answers to Frequently Asked Questions, visit the website: <http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/sscra/a/scra2.htm>.

DMVA welcomes new Director of Veterans Programs.

Mr. William J. Devereaux joined DMVA's staff as the new Director of Veterans Programs on Monday, 26 January 2004. Mr. Devereaux is a highly decorated combat wounded Vietnam veteran who saw service with both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. He has been active in veterans' organizations as a member of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. Prior to his appointment as Director, Mr. Devereaux served as a Veterans Service Officer in Camden County.

CW5 (Ret) Robert L. Wimberly retires from state service.

CW5 (Ret) Robert Wimberly retired today as Chief of the Veterans Benefits Bureau, where he oversaw the operation of the Department's successful Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Korean War Medal Programs. Thank you, Mr. Wimberly, for your commitment and devotion to the State's veterans and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Best wishes and good luck on your retirement!

Military Retirees will see a pay increase.

An estimated 150,000 military retirees will see an increase in their pay on February 2. The National Defense Authorization Act, enacted in November, significantly modified a long-standing law preventing retirees from receiving full retired pay if they also received disability pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The new law allows concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability pay for retirees with more than 20 years of service and a disability rating of 50 percent or more. This restored pay will be phased in over a 10-year period that began January 1st. The first payments are due February 2 for the law change that was effective January 1. The additional funds also will be paid February 2 based on entitlement for January 1 to January 31. The restored pay is paid on the same schedule as current military retired pay. Recurring payments will be made on the first business day of each month based on entitlement for the month before. For more details regarding who is eligible for the restored pay and how payments will be made, visit www.dfas.mil and see the topics under "Retired and Annuitant Pay," or visit the myPay website at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Education Center's upcoming event schedule.

For more information about any of these events, please call the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation office at (732) 335-0033.

28 Feb	1 p.m.	Author Lecture by Gerald R. Gioglio, who will discuss his book, Days of Decision: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors I the Military During the Vietnam War
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Reservists Tax Break.

Under recently enacted legislation (PL 108-121), reservists who travel more than 100 miles to attend weekend drills without reimbursement for travel expenses are allowed to deduct travel, food, and lodging expenses from federal income taxes. Previously, reservists were expected to itemize their travel mileage and expenses, which had to exceed two percent of their gross income to qualify for reimbursement. However, deductions can be claimed with no limitations on the amount that can be deducted in one year. Officials warn, though, that deductions cannot exceed the federal rate for reimbursement, which varies by location. Additionally, under the new law, reservists who do not travel 100 miles for a drill are still allowed to claim deductions if expenses exceed two percent of their income. The benefits are part of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 and apply to expenses incurred after December 1, 2002.

New Jersey Army National Guard (NJARNG) Logistics Advisory Committee Meeting

The NJARNG Logistics Advisory Committee (LAC) conducted its monthly meeting on Thursday, 22 January 2004, at the National Guard Training Center (NGTC), Sea Girt, New Jersey. The meeting was attended by USPFO-NJ, J4, Major Subordinate Command (MSC) and selected Battalion level logistical representatives. To assist unit commanders in preparing their units for mobilization for the war on terrorism, the LAC Committee Chairman, LTC Joseph F. Sarama, focused the meeting on a pre-mobilization training to be conducted for all battalion and individual unit level supply sergeants. Primary training will center on the Showdown Inspection of Organizational Clothing & Individual Equipment, Central Issue Facility Operations, and the requisitioning of Chemical Defense Equipment. The training will be accomplished during the conduct of the Semi Annual Logistics Training Program, 19 February 2004 at the Training & Training Technology Battle Lab (T3BL), Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Armory Happenings – Check to see what’s happening at an Armory near you.

29 Jan – 1 Feb	Tool Show	Mount Holly Armory
30 Jan	Circus	Jersey City Armory
30-31 Jan	Auction	Cherry Hill Armory
1 Feb	Circus	Cherry Hill Armory
3 Feb	Circus	Bordentown Armory
7-9 Feb	2004 Winter Games “Special Olympics”	Morristown Armory
12-15 Feb	Tool Show	Woodbridge Armory
13-15 Feb	Antique Sale	Lawrenceville Armory
19-22 Feb	Tool Show & Sale	Lawrenceville Armory
20-21 Feb	Auction	Cherry Hill Armory
22 Feb	Sports Card & Comics Show	Bordentown Armory
27-28 Feb	High School Wrestling Tournament	Teaneck Armory
29 Feb	NASCAR Collectibles Show	Bordentown Armory

Today in History...

Today is Friday, 30 January 2004 and the 30th day of the year. There are 337 days left in the year. On this day...

- 1847 – The town of Yerba Buena was renamed San Francisco.
- 1862 – The U.S. Navy’s first ironclad warship, the “Monitor,” was launched.
- 1933 – “The Lone Ranger” premiered on ABC radio. The program ran for 2,956 episodes and ended in 1955.
- 1946 – 1st issue of the Franklin Roosevelt dime.
- 1969 – Beatles perform their last gig together – a 42-minute free concert.
- 1989 – Five pharaoh sculptures from 1470 BC found at temple of Luxor.
- 1992 – Space Shuttle Discovery 15 lands.
- 2002 – Japan’s last coal mine was closed due to high production costs and cheap imports.

Fun Facts

- The first VCR was made in 1956 and was the size of a piano.
- The eye makes movements 50 times every minute.
- The first human-made object to break the sound barrier was a whip.
- The most used letters in the English language are E, T, A, O, I, and N.
- The first jukebox was located in San Francisco in 1899.

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