

December 11, 2025



Ready To Serve ★ Proud To Have Served

Commissioner's Corner



"The First Muster", a National Guard Heritage Painting by Don Troiani, courtesy of the National Guard Bureau.

Celebrating the Season and the National Guard's History

With the holiday season upon us, I hope you get to enjoy some well-earned moments with loved ones at the many celebrations lighting up New Jersey.

Each year on December 13, we honor one of the longest-running traditions of service in our nation's history. In 1636, The Massachusetts Bay Colony reorganized its militia into three standing regiments: the North, South, and East. That act established the earliest formally recognized militia units in North America and laid the foundation for what we now know as the National Guard.

This December marks 389 years since that milestone, and the lineage of those early regiments continues to echo through today's force. One example is the 181st Infantry Regiment, a modern descendant of the original North Regiment. Though part of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, the 181st serves under New Jersey's 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. This enduring lineage underscores how the National Guard's earliest traditions continue to shape the force we serve in today.

This week also brings another milestone worth highlighting. For more than 321 years, commemorated each December 12th, the New Jersey National Guard has served our state and nation with distinction. Serving alongside you is a privilege. The Citizen Soldier and Citizen Airman tradition has consistently demonstrated its resilience and significance across generations. I am confident that your service will strengthen both New Jersey and the United States in the years ahead.

As we celebrate the holiday season and these milestones, I encourage all of us to look out for one another. This time of year can be joyful, but it can also be demanding. A quick check-in, a listening ear, or a moment of support can make the difference. The strength of our team has always come from our people and the way

we take care of each other.

Thank you for your dedication and the commitment you bring to the Garden State communities that count on us. Your service keeps a nearly four-century tradition alive and moves it confidently into the future.

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 Yvonne L. Mays
Adjutant General & Commissioner



Featured Events

Veterans Making a Difference in Our Community

Serving All Veterans

Regional Mercer County

VFW
NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Post 3525
77 Christine Ave.
Hamilton TWP, NJ 08619

Saturday, December
13, 2025, 1000 - 1400





Mercer County Veteran Services

Services Include:

**DD 214's Benefits Claims Housing
Household Supplies Children's Toys Employment
Ongoing Support**

Steven Stokes	Questions or Comments—Please Contact	
Bob Looby	609-826-1206	stokessteven414@gmail.com
	908-894-0746	boblooby@ptd.net

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 13 Hamilton Twp
[Mercer County Veterans Outreach Event](#)
- December 13 | Bridgewater
[63rd Army Band Holiday Concert](#)
- December 13 | Wrightstown
[Wreaths Across America](#)
- December 17 | Morris Plains
[State Medal Ceremony & Veterans Outreach Campaign](#)
- December 19 | Bordentown
[NJNG Family Programs Winter Wonderland](#)

Community Calendar

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

[View Full Calendar](#)

NJ National Guard



42nd Regional Support Group

Soldiers from Task Force Integrator, [42nd Regional Support Group](#), New Jersey Army National Guard, recently conducted individual and rifle weapons training in Iraq. The training, which consisted of weapons zeroing and completing various marksmanship exercises, reinforces our Soldiers' discipline, focus, and precision.

The 42nd RSG is currently deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of [Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve](#).



177th Fighter Wing

Jersey Devil firefighters with the [177th Fighter Wing](#) conducted annual training in live fire scenarios at the Atlantic County Fire Training Center in Egg Harbor Township.



NJ Army National Guard

The [National Guard Marksmanship Training Center](#) and the U.S. Army National Guard Sniper School welcome 36 elite sniper teams to the 55th Winston P. Wilson Championship and 35th Armed Forces Skilled at Arms Meeting Sniper Matches at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

These sniper teams will encounter various challenges and courses of fire starting December 6th as these teams compete in their respective competitions.

The 102nd Cavalry's very own SFC Jankowski and SSG Morrison will be representing the New Jersey Army National Guard.

Join Our Team

**100% Free College Tuition
Bonuses | GI Bill
Student Loan Repayment**



DMAVA Veterans Services



Commissioner-Designate Vincent Solomeno Completes 21-County Veterans Tour

Commissioner-Designate of Veterans Affairs Vincent Solomeno recently concluded his 21-county veterans tour throughout the month of November. The tour reinforced our commitment to ensuring every veteran has access to the benefits, programs, and services they have earned.

In recent years, New Jersey has invested more, done more, and achieved more for our veterans than ever before—and there is still important work ahead as we move toward launching the new New Jersey Department of Veterans Affairs. We are building a stronger future for our veterans community, and your feedback remains essential.





Ceremonial check presentation at Jersey City Armory

Commissioner-Designate of Veterans Affairs Vincent Solomeno attended and spoke at the presentation of a ceremonial check for \$350,000 to NJSOSVETS from New Jersey State Senator Raj Mukherji at the Jersey City Armory in Jersey City, NJ on November 25, 2025.

The ceremonial check highlights the line-item appropriation in the State Fiscal Year 2026 budget - sponsored by Senator Mukherji, Chairman of the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee - that will support SOS Veterans with providing emergency housing assistance, housing stability, and supportive services to veterans at risk of homelessness.

[View Images](#)



State Medal Ceremony

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs held a State Medal Ceremony at the Hainesport Volunteer Fire Company in Hainesport, NJ on November 21, 2025.

[View Images](#)



Get Connected to Resources & Services

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has partnered with Unite Us to connect individuals and families to a wide variety of services and resources.

Unite Us is a coordinated care referral network of health and social service providers. Unite Us can connect our New Jersey military and veteran community to resources to obtain benefits, food assistance, housing, education, transportation, behavioral health services, peer support and more.

[Learn More / Request Assistance](#)



Veteran Homelessness

The mission of Bringing Veterans Home (BVH) is to effectively end veteran homelessness in New Jersey by enhancing existing systems, creating rapid access to housing, and ensuring homelessness becomes rare, brief and non-recurring.

BVH creates a clear path to stable housing for veterans experiencing homelessness through a coordinated network of services and support.

[Learn More / Refer a Veteran](#)

**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,

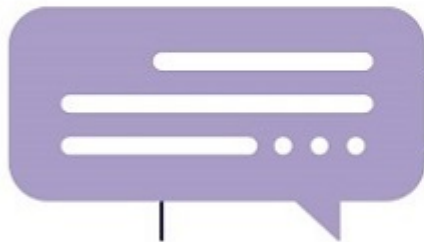
OR EMAIL:

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

NEW JERSEY
YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

 **YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY**

Now accepting applications
for Class 61 - January 2026!

APPLY NOW!

TUITION FREE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

-  njyca.gov/admissions
-  rpm@dmava.nj.gov
-  (800) 997-5587 / (732) 974-6516





NJ MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE

* /njarngfac



NJNG Child & Youth Program

* /njngcyp



Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

DEIB Newsletter

State Partners



NJ State Agencies

- [Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicides among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families](#)
- [The New Jersey's Governor "We Value Our Veterans" Awards](#)
- [Bringing Veterans Home](#)
- [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](#)
- [Veterans & Spouses Entering the Educator Workforce](#)
- [Journey Through Jersey](#)

Federal Partners



VA makes it easier for women Veterans to access gynecology care

VA News | December 4, 2025

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that women Veterans can now schedule appointments directly with VA gynecology providers without a referral from a primary care provider.

The new, streamlined process takes effect today and eliminates the previous requirement for a PCP referral to access VA gynecology care. Instead, enrolled women Veterans can schedule an appointment directly with a VA gynecology specialist if they choose.

The change will better serve the more than 1 million women Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care.

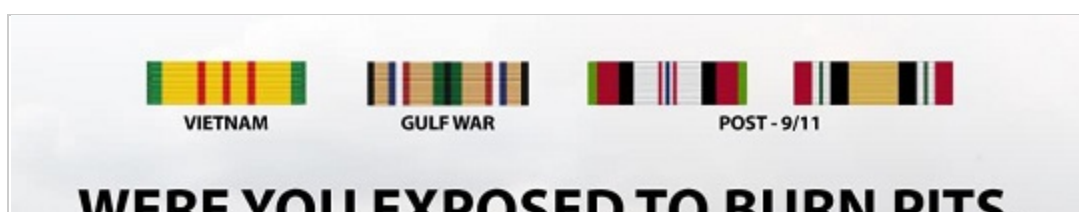
[Learn More](#)

2026 COLA Update: New VA Disability Pay Rates Revealed

theSITREP | December 10, 2025

In this episode, the SITREP breaks down the 2026 VA disability increase, explains how the new COLA adjustment affects your monthly compensation, and shows how adding eligible dependents can boost your VA pay even further.

[Watch YouTube Video](#)



**WERE YOU EXPOSED TO BURN PITS,
NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CHEMICALS,
AGENT ORANGE, OR OTHER TOXINS
WHILE SERVING IN THE MILITARY?**



**Apply for VA
health care today
at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).**

VA

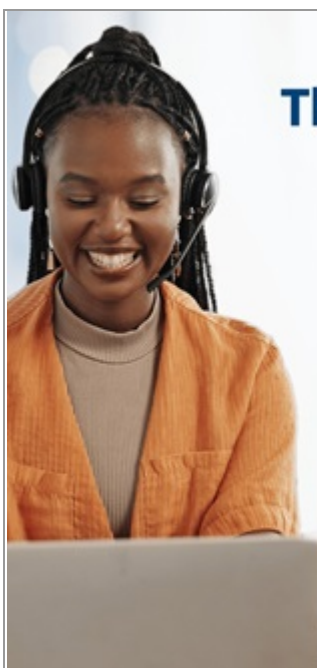


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Have questions?

Call 1-800-MyVA411 and press 0
to speak with someone right away.



**The Women Veterans Call Center
is Your Guide to VA**

Live women representatives, many of whom are
Veterans, are standing by to help.

**Call or text 1-855-VA-WOMEN
(1-855-829-6636)
or chat with us online**

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Featured Links

- [National Parks Pass](#)
- [VALife Insurance](#)
- [VA Urgent Care Services](#)
- [VA Caregiver Support Program](#)
- [Accessing Records from the National Archives or NPRC](#)
- [PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#)
- [How to Check Your PACT Act Claim Status](#)
- [Download VA Benefit Letters](#)
- [Podcasts on Veterans' Issues](#)
- [VA Health and Benefits Mobile App](#)
- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
- [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#)
- [Million Veteran Program](#)
- [#VetResources](#)
- [VA Resource Navigator](#)

Community Spotlight





New Year To Bring Veterans Homes To Ocean County

Chris Lundy | jerseyshoreonline.com | December 8, 2025

BERKELEY - Ground has already been broken, and the dirt has been moved around, but people driving by want to know when they'll see the first homes at the Tunnel To Towers development.

There will be 99 apartments and 25 small houses deed restricted for veterans at 359 Atlantic City Boulevard (Route 9). The property will also have a common area for the veterans to get care they need, such as behavioral health, legal services, and peer support. Anything not directly provided by Tunnel To Towers will be available through partnerships with local caregivers.

[Read Full Story](#)



NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Wreaths were placed at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel, NJ on December 10, 2025.

The wreaths were placed at the base of each of the memorial's 366

eight-foot-tall black granite panels - each representing a day of the year - listing the names of the 1,564 New Jersey men and one woman who gave their lives while serving in Southeast Asia.

In addition, the Wreaths Across America convoy stopped at the memorial on their annual journey to Arlington National Cemetery.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

[View Images](#)

Soldier Spotlight



Major Andrew Pope

The New Jersey Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion is proud to congratulate Major Andrew Pope on his promotion from Captain to Major.

MAJ Pope's career in both the Guard and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion is seasoned. He previously commanded the state's Recruit Sustainment Program, preparing more than 1,000 new Soldiers each year for Initial Entry Training. He has also served as Aide de Camp to the Adjutant General of New Jersey, Brigade Plans Officer, as well as a Company Commander in the 1-114th Infantry Battalion during a deployed rotation.

He has earned the Expert Infantryman's Badge and is a graduate of the Army Basic Mountaineer Course, Pathfinder School, and Air Assault School.

These milestones, accomplishments, and years of proven leadership warrant this deserved promotion. The battalion looks forward to the great things he will accomplish in this new role.

Veteran Spotlight



Albert Hujdich

NJ Army National Guard veteran Albert Hujdich served in combat in the Korean War during his ten years of service with the US Marine Corps.

His [veteran oral history interview](#) was recorded by the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey over 24 years ago.

Recently, his interview was discovered by the Marine Corps Association in Quantico. Journalist William Treuting was researching for a new documentary on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of "[The Battle of the Chosin Reservoir: A Marine Corps Battle Study](#)."

Segments of Albert Hujdich's interview are interspersed throughout the hour-long documentary.

Albert Hujdich passed away in 2015, but his legacy survives.

Never Forget



New Jersey Fallen Heroes Memorial

In Honor of all those from New Jersey who gave
their lives in the fight against terrorism during
Operation Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom.
In humble gratitude, we remember their sacrifice.

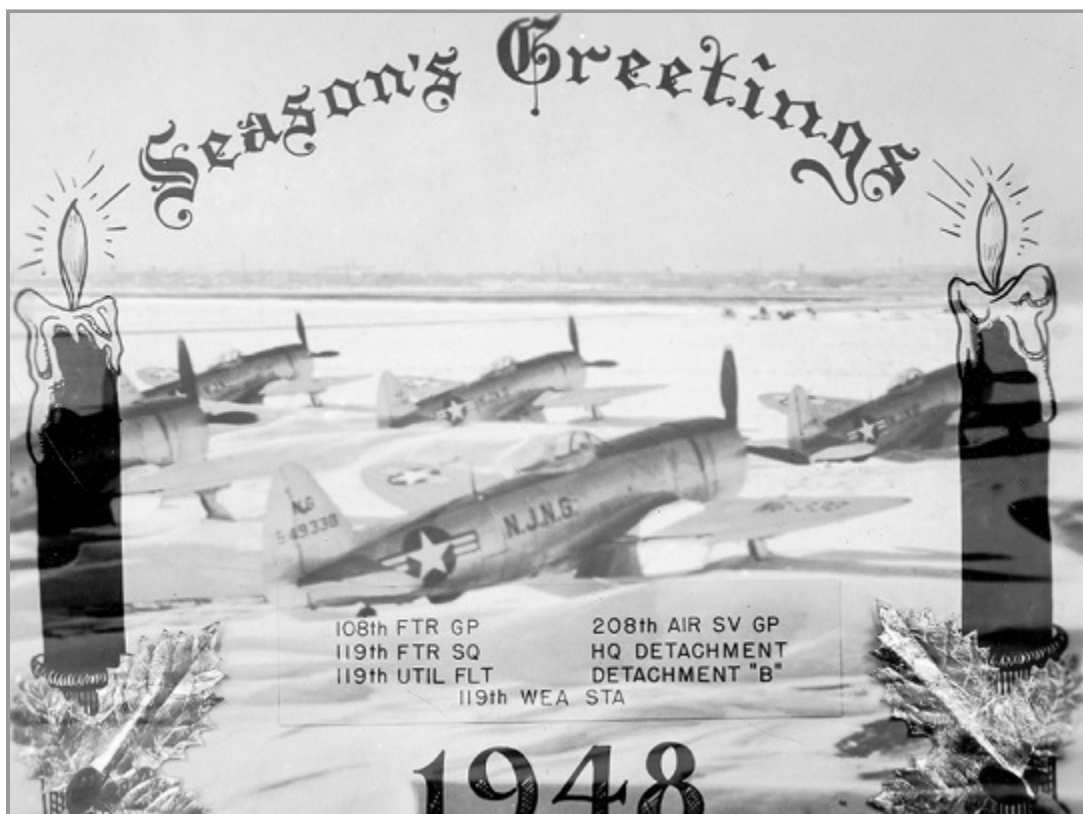
Memorial Inscription

*"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





Season's Greetings from the NJ Air National Guard in 1948.

December 7, 1941

The Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Army sergeant George Schmersahl of Bloomfield was killed in action that day, perhaps the first New Jerseyan to die in World War II.

December 8, 1941

The United States declared war on Japan in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack. Around 560,500 New Jerseyans, including 10,000 women and 360,000 draftees, served in all branches of the armed forces during World War II. A total of 10,372 of them, including ten of the state's seventeen Medal of Honor awardees, made the ultimate sacrifice and were killed in action or died of wounds or other causes.

December 12, 1704

On this date the first militia act was signed by the newly joined East and West Jersey Provinces.

December 13, 1776

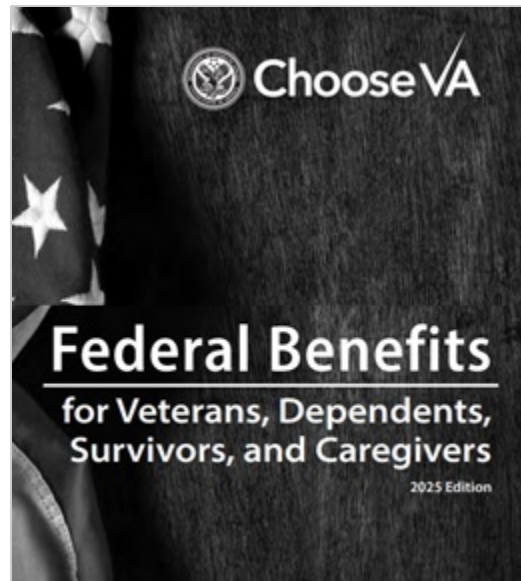
American General Charles Lee, a former British officer, was captured while dallying at Basking Ridge as the British Army crossed New Jersey in pursuit of the retreating Americans.

December 13, 1862

Most of the New Jersey regiments in the Union Army of the Potomac were present at the disastrous Civil War battle of Fredericksburg. Some units suffered heavy losses, including the Twenty-fourth New Jersey regiment, with 136 casualties, and the Twenty-eighth New Jersey regiment, with 193.

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 [DMAVA 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.

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