

DMAVA Highlights

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108th Engineers arrive home Sunday to smiles, tears of family members



Top right - A family member peers over a sign waiting for the arrival of the 108th Civil Engineers. Photo by Staff Sgt. John Crankshaw III 444th MPAD. Far left - members of the 108th Civil Engineer Squadron step off the aircraft on July 11 after a six month deployment to Iraq. Bottom - Tech. Sgt. Dan Salfas gives his son a "joyride" after arriving back from Iraq. Photos by Tech Sgt. Barb Harbison, 108th Public Affairs Office



By Army Staff Sgt. John T. Crankshaw III, 444th MPAD

McGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE – Six months ago, family members of more than 60 airmen from the New Jersey Air National Guard's 108th Wing were overwhelmed with uncertainty, fear, and sadness as their husbands, wives, and children boarded a plane destined for combat. The tears of sadness transformed to tears of joy Sunday when the wing's Civil Engineering Squadron stepped off a plane, onto U.S. tarmac, and into the base's passenger terminal, where they were greeted by proud and relieved family members and friends.

The returning airmen were involved in critical construction projects throughout the Baghdad area during their six-month tour. But Sunday wasn't about war stories; it was about hugs, kisses, and smiles.

Lt. Col. Paul Novello's family was among the first to arrive and had been waiting for this moment since saying goodbye six months earlier. "We tracked a countdown on calendars," said P.J., Novello's 5-year old son. "We each got one for Christmas last year," added Gina, his 6-year-old daughter.

"It was very difficult having my husband gone," said Carolyn,

Novello's wife who wore a custom-made "Just Kiss Me!" T-shirt. "But it's so nice to have him back home because I have a huge to-do list for him," she added with a chuckle.

The family was able to keep in touch with the squadron's commander though e-mail and Skype video calls, but seeing him in person brought his 18-year-old daughter, Megan, to tears.

Staying in touch with the aid of technology was a common theme among the families. Kristen Salfas said her husband, Tech Sgt. Daniel Salfas, watched his son Ryan grow up one weekend at a time through an internet connection.

"It was so tough with him gone," Kristen said with a tear in her eye. "I'm so excited to finally have him home," she added as her 13-month-old son showed off his newly discovered walking skills.

When Salfas made his way through the passenger terminal's crowd, he hoisted his son high into the air before lowering him to a barrage of kisses. He then placed his son back in the stroller, carefully avoiding the welcome-home balloons and signs, and set his sights on Kristen. The reunited family then walked out of the terminal and headed home together for the first time in more than six months.

VA eases claims process for veterans with PTSD

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2010 - The Veterans Affairs Department will publish a final regulation tomorrow intended to ease the claims process and improve access to health care for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, VA officials announced today.

"This nation has a solemn obligation to the men and women who have honorably served this country and suffer from the often-devastating emotional wounds of war," Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said in a statement. "This final regulation goes a long way to ensure that veterans receive the benefits and services they need."

The new rule, to be published in the Federal Register, will relax the evidence requirement if the PTSD stressor claimed by a veteran is linked to "fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and is consistent with the places, types and circumstances of the veteran's service," a VA news release said.

Currently, VA decision makers are required to confirm that a noncombat veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity, the release said.

Under the new rule, VA no longer will require substantiation of a stressor tied to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist can confirm that the experience recalled by a veteran supports a PTSD diagnosis and the veteran's symptoms are related to the stressor, a VA release said.

"With this new PTSD regulation, we are acknowledging the inherently stressful nature ... of military service in which the reality and fear of hostile or terrorist activity is always present," Michael Walcoff, VA's acting undersecretary for benefits, said during a news conference today.

The regulation will eliminate the need to search for records to verify veterans' accounts, "often a very involved and protracted process," Walcoff said, and enable VA officials "to move more quickly to award more benefits to veterans suffering from PTSD."

More than 400,000 veterans currently are receiving compensation benefits for PTSD, VA officials said. And of the nearly 400,000 veterans treated at VA facilities for PTSD in fiscal 2009, nearly 70,000, or 19 percent, were veterans of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Dr. Robert A. Petzel, VA's undersecretary for health, said the regulation will be particularly beneficial for veterans who have had their military records damaged or destroyed, female veterans whose records don't specify they have combat experience, and veterans who have experienced combat but have no record of it.

President Barack Obama called the changes a "long-overdue step" in his weekly address.

DMAVA Green

By Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison, Public Affairs Specialist

So retirement is around the corner and we have a house full of things that we want to get rid of before we sell our house here and move to Maryland. I don't want to fill up the landfill with all our extra stuff and through research for this column I have found there are places for almost everything. Here are some more ways I – and you – can recycle our used items.

Do you have a collection of wine corks? If you are crafty, type "craft ideas using wine corks" into Google and you will come up with lots of things to make with your collection. But if crafting isn't your style, visit <http://www.yemmhart.com/news+/winecorkrecycling.htm> where they recycle old wine corks into cork floor and wall tiles.

What about your collections of books, CDs, and DVDs? You can check with your local library. Many will take them as donations to used in a book sale to raise funds. Or maybe you have a used book store in the neighborhood that will give you cash for those novels you read before turning off the lights at night. Or maybe you just want a new read. Try www.swaptree.com. List what you want to swap, find what others have and make your trades. All for the cost of mailing.

Did you recently get an order in the mail packed with those foam peanuts that stick to everything? Stop and visit http://www.epspackaging.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid=4 for information on where to send or drop off those bothersome little things for recycling.

Remodeling and tearing up the carpet to reveal the wood floors beneath? If you can find a local carpet recovery company at <http://www.carpetrecovery.org/>, you can get rid of old carpet (even that stuff that has seen kids and pets stain it into another color). Some of the recycled carpet is helping the oil spill operations in the gulf.

Have you recently gained weight, lost it or maybe just tired of the bras in your lingerie drawer? There are women in need of good, clean bras. Check out Bosom Buddy Recycling at <http://www.brarecycling.org/> and your undies will help women in shelters, transitional housing and breast cancer survivors. The plus side? You now have room for some new stuff!

Keep Green!

Quotes

Let him that would move the world, first move himself.

--Socrates

You can only predict things after they happen.

--Eugene Ionesco

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Families

DMAVA Highlights

Morning PT run at Youth Camp 2010, Sea Girt



New Jersey Army National Guard Master Sgt. Robert Cuff, right, leads campers on a morning jog Thursday near the close of the 16th annual New Jersey National Guard Youth Camp. More than 90 campers and 120 counselors participated in the weeklong event at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt. Campers got a week of fun in the sun and enjoyed the surf on the installation's bucolic beach. More than 120 volunteers and counselors supported the camp designed to foster an understanding of military life for the children and grandchildren of our active and retired Soldiers or Airmen of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard as well as employees of the NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The highlight of the week was a parachute demonstration over Sea Girt by Guard members. The camp is an integral part of New Jersey Army and Air National Guard Retention and Family Programs and a way of saying thank you to members of the National Guard and DMAVA for all their hard work. Photo by Spc. Robert Neill, 444th MPAD.

Military Appreciation Day at Six Flags, Aug. 6

Six Flags Great Adventure and Wild Safari is holding their Military Appreciation Day on Aug. 6. The special package of \$32.10 per person includes admission to Six Flags Great Adventure and Wild Safari and a two hour all-you-can-eat buffet in the Old Country Picnic Grove.

To get the special promotion, go to www.sixflags.com/great-adventure and type mil2010 in the Promo Code (upper right hand corner). Call Lisa at 732-928-2000, ext. 2864 if you have any questions.



The buffet is from noon to 2 p.m., with a menu of hamburgers, hot dogs, pasta salad, vegetarian baked beans, ice cream cups and Coca-Cola® products. Theme park hours are 10:30 a.m.-10 p.m. and the Safari is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sittercity: new military childcare program

Your Sittercity membership is funded by the Department of Defense and is available at no cost to you! Go to www.sittercity.com/DOD to register.

Activate your membership today and find local sitters and military care providers- only takes 2 minutes.

Sittercity is America's largest and most trusted online source for in-home caregivers with over 1 million nationwide caregiver profiles. Sittercity helps you find:

- Babysitters: For after-school, hourly care, school vacations, deployment and PCS, extended work hours, special needs children, and anytime you need a sitter.
- Nannies: For full and part time, infant and young child care
- Certified CDH/FCC care providers
- Care providers who are authorized access to an installation
- Elder care providers, dog walkers, housekeepers and tutors

Your Sittercity membership gives you online access to local caregivers with profiles that include background checks, parent reviews, references, a 4-Step screening process, pictures and more.

Company offers free banners to welcome home service members

BuildASign.com respects the continued service and sacrifice that our military personnel selflessly provide every day. To express their support of our brave men and women in uniform, they want to invite you to take part in their free "Welcome Home" banner promotion. To date, they have given away over 60,000 banners. All banners can be customized in full color, including pictures; they just ask that the customer pay the shipping and handling fee, which varies based on how much in advance of the event you need the banner. [Source: <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/News/2010/03/Banners>]

Blue Star Mothers reaching out to Gold Star families

By Karen Rokosny, Blue Star Mother

I am a member of Blue Star Mothers - NJ - 4, and Blue to Gold Liaison for that Chapter. If anyone knows of a Gold Star Family who has not been presented with a Gold Star Banner honoring their Fallen Hero, please contact me and, if the family wishes, I will secure and present it to them. I will also work with any Veteran's group on the above mission.

My contact information is: BSM-NJ-4, PO Box 916, Ocean Gate NJ 08740; daytime phone 732-901-7035.

Et Cetera

Obama announces return of the SAVE award

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2010 - President Barack Obama wants federal employees to submit their ideas for eliminating government waste and saving American taxpayers' money as part of the 2010 SAVE Award program.

Obama made the announcement in a video on the White House website July 8.

"If you see a way that the government can do its job better or do the same job for less money, I want to know about it," he said.

The program – its acronym stands for "securing Americans' value and efficiency" -- began last year and was an instant success.

"In just three weeks, federal employees submitted more than 38,000 ideas identifying opportunities to save money and improve performance," said Peter Orszag, director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Nancy Fichtner, a fiscal program support clerk at the Colorado Veterans Affairs Hospital in Grand Junction, Colo., received the 2009 SAVE award for her proposal that saved about \$2 million. She suggested that the Veterans Affairs Department find a way to reuse medicines that are prescribed by physicians, but not used by patients.

The deadline for submissions is July 22, with the winners being announced in September.

"In a change from last year, we also are asking federal employees to help rate the submissions from their fellow workers," Orszag said. "This new feature will allow employees to apply their insight to the evaluation process, making sure the best ideas make it into the fiscal 2012 budget."

Some of the most innovative ideas for efficiencies and savings come from those federal employees on the front lines, Obama said.

Civil servants interested in submitting their ideas should go to <http://SAVEAward.gov>.

Check out Army Soldier Show, coming to a stage near you

If you are looking for some entertainment this year, you can find it at the U.S. Army Soldier Show which is making four stops in the area between now and November. Pick a date and come watch the music and stage show that the Soldiers give to their audience.

Sept. 25 – time to be announced – Morris Knolls High School, 50 Knolls Drive, Rockaway (Picatinny Arsenal)

Nov. 4 – 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. – Expo Theater, building 1215, Avenue of Memories, Fort Monmouth

For more information on the show, visit <http://www.armymwr.com/recreation/entertainment/soldiershow/default.aspx>.

D.A.R.E. camp gets fishy!



New Jersey Army National Guard Sgt. Roger Galvez, left, helps 11-year-old Anthony Delgado of Elizabeth untangle his fishing line at an outing Wednesday that was part of the annual D.A.R.E. Leadership Summer Camp sponsored by the Guard and its law enforcement partners. Attendance at the weeklong camp is at an all time high, 150 middle school students, up from an average of 100. The aim of the camp is to reinforce the messages of the D.A.R.E. program, which encourages young people to make positive choices and avoid the pitfalls of alcohol and drug abuse. Over the course of the week, the students participated in team building exercises, went fishing, camped and visited several military installations as well as the Battleship New Jersey. Students from across the state are nominated by the National Guard Soldiers and Airmen as well as law enforcement officers who run the program. The National Guard's participation in the program is part of its Counter Drug operation. Photo by Sgt. Wayne Woolley, DMAVA Public Affairs.

Healthcare for women vets available at CBOCs

Women veterans are reminded of the services available at the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in South Jersey.

Vineland CBOC – Comprehensive care for women including primary care, gender specific care (gyn care), mental health, podiatry and eye care

Ventnor CBOC – Primary care for women (soon to offer gender-specific care after provider training), mental health, podiatry and eye care

Cape May CBOC – Primary care for women, mental health, podiatry and eye care

Veterans & Military

Fast-running Soldiers needed to try out for NJ Guard ATM team

So Soldier, think you're fast?

Why not compete to represent the New Jersey Army National Guard at the Army 10-miler on Oct. 24 in Washington, D.C.?

The tryout will be held on Aug. 3 at the National Guard Training Center at Sea Girt. Show time is 6 a.m. at Building 35. The competition is open to both sexes and all ranks from within the Army Guard.

Soldiers who make the team will be placed on temporary duty for the race and their registration will be paid.

If you can't make the tryout, but want to try to represent the state at the big race, the posted results of a race 10 miles or longer can be used as a qualifier as long as that race is held within two months of the race.

For more information about competing, contact Sgt. 1st Class Melanie Rowton by email at Melanie.rowton@us.army.mil. For general information about the race, visit www.army10miler.com.

Invitation to join extended by JWV Post 972 to all veterans

An invitation is extended to all military personnel to join the Lt Seth Dvorin Post 972 of the Jewish War Veterans. The veterans meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the Marlboro Jewish Center located at 103 School Road West, Marlboro, N.J. Meeting time is 7:30 p.m.

Second Lt. Seth Dvorin was a native of Monmouth County who made the ultimate sacrifice while proudly defending the American way of life and liberty. Lt Dvorin was killed in Iraq Feb. 3, 2004. The post was renamed in May of 2004 to honor Lt. Dvorin.

Post 972 covers Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Anyone interested in joining this post or a similar post should contact Richard Berg at r2d2b2@optonline.net or Richard Dvorin at ltsethdvorinpost972jwv@comcast.net.

Troops to Teachers helps military lead in classroom

The Troops to Teachers program is designed to assist separating or retiring military personnel in pursuing a rewarding second career in public education (elementary, secondary or vocational) while also facilitating employment in public schools. Funded by the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and administered by the [U.S. Department of Defense](#) through DANTES, the long term goal of the program is to help improve American education by providing mature, self-disciplined, experienced and dedicated personnel for the nation's classrooms. New Jersey's Troops to Teachers office has counseled hundreds of interested military personnel, advising them on routes and programs to achieve full teacher certification in New Jersey, and referring them to school districts for employment.

To learn more, consider attending one of the upcoming program briefings at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Contact 800-680-0884 or via e-mail at tttnj@doe.state.nj.us for briefing and program information. You can also visit the program on the web at: www.nj.gov/education/tttnj.

NJ company receives ESGR honor; third year in a row for the state

By Kryn Westhoven, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST - For the third year in a row a New Jersey based business has been selected to receive the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for outstanding support of their employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.

This year the Whitehouse Station-based pharmaceutical maker Merck and Company is one of the fifteen employers being honored with the prestigious Freedom Award.

"I would like to thank the members of our awards/nominating committee for the work they performed in screening over 60 nominations and again coming up with national winner," said Carmen Venticinque, State Chair, New Jersey Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve headquartered here.

Almost 2,500 Guard and Reserve members, or their family members, from across the country nominated employers for exceptional support, which included providing full salary, continuation of benefits, care packages and even family support to employees fulfilling their military obligation.

Marking the 15th anniversary of the award, instituted in 1996 under then Secretary of Defense William Perry, this year's honorees range from a small plumbing company to a state government to a large grocery store chain.

"I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all of our committee members for the great work you're doing in support of New Jersey's men and women who are citizen Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guard members and their employers," said Venticinque.

"Our job is not finished yet. Not by a long shot. As long as we have continuing presence in the Middle East and in other locations around the world, our services will be needed," added Venticinque as he spoke of the work of the 120 volunteers serving on the state committee.

The Freedom Award will be presented to these employers during a formal ceremony Sept. 23 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.

Veterans with disabilities can get free hunting, fishing licenses

If you are a honorably discharged veteran with a service-connected disability and a New Jersey resident – you are entitled to free New Jersey hunting and fishing licenses, permits and stamps. Your disability must be declared by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to be a service-connected disability of any kind for this benefit.

To find out the procedures needed to get certified, necessary documents and any restrictions, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/dvinfo.htm. Questions can be directed to Sylvia Hall at 908-637-4125 or Sylvia.Hall@dep.state.nj.us.

Calendar

"Last Hooah" July 16-18

Join the 102nd Cavalry Regiment Association, "The Essex Troop," when they celebrate their 120th anniversary on Sept. 25.

The celebration will be held at the home of the regiment, the West Orange Armory, 1315 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange, from 6- 11 p.m. There will be a cocktail hour, buffet dinner and beer, wine and soft drinks.

The Essex Troop is comprised of the 102nd Cavalry Regiment/ Group, 102nd Cavalry Squadron, 117th Cavalry Squadron, 38th Cavalry Squadron, 50th Armor, 102nd Armor and the 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Cost is \$25 per person. Attire is the Army Service Uniform with 4-in-hand tie or service equivalent for military attendees and business dress for civilians.

RSVP by Sept. 4 to the 102nd Regiment Association, Essex Troop 120th Anniversary, 1315 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange NJ 07052. Make checks payable to The Essex Troop. If you need information, call 973-736-0952 or e-mail etrrp@verizon.net or fwdulfer@verizon.net.

Savino golf tourney, Sept. 24

The 14th Annual LTC Dave Savino Memorial golf tournament will be held on Sept. 24 at the Hanover Golf Course, Wrightstown. The tourney begins at 12:30 p.m. with a shotgun start and will be played in a two person scramble format (best ball).

Cost is \$100 donation per person and includes greens fees, cart, refreshments and door prizes. A buffet lunch will be served after the tournament at the course.

Send your payments to 108th WG/MXQ, ATTN: SMSgt Mike Balas, 3333 Wonnacott Blvd., JBM-DL, NJ 08641. Make checks payable to LTC Dave Savino Memorial Fund. If you have any questions, call Balas at 609-894-4692.

The course is located at 133 Larrison Road, Wrightstown, 8 1/2 miles west of Great Adventure, just off route 537.



Somerset Patriots host veterans

Operation Jersey Cares is hosting the 8th Annual Veterans of America Day at TD Bank Ballpark, Bridgewater, on Aug. 29, starting at 4 p.m. There will be a celebration with a parade for the veterans with the guest of honor, Jack Gartenberg.

Gartenberg served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1944-1946 and is a Iwo Jima survivor.

After the celebration, the Somerset Patriots invite everyone to stay and enjoy the game between the Southern Maryland Blue Claws and the Patriots. Veterans can receive free tickets; cost of tickets for friends and family will be \$5. To order tickets, contact Marc Russinoff, Somerset Patriots, 908-252-0700, ext. 215 or e-mail mrussinoff@somersetpatriots.com.

Park promotion for the day is a camouflage Patriots hat to the first 2,000 fans in attendance.

Fiscal social - music, more - July 29

Who couldn't stand a midsummer's break? Especially one that has food, refreshments, live music and is cheap (\$5)?

Come join the Fiscal Division social – Rockin' with Rog and the Coyote Jack Band – on July 29 at the Lawrenceville Armory, 4-6 p.m.

Here is your chance to see the band that has DMAVA employees Roger Bushyeager and John Hastings as members; with the band's original music to entertain you.

For those interested in attending, see either Tina Taylor or Dawn Baulo, Fiscal, to pay the cover charge.

I wonder who the bouncer will be?



NJVVMF golf outing, Aug. 2

On August 2, the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation will be holding its 16th annual Golf Tournament at the Olde York Country Club in Columbus, N.J.

Registration and the range open at 8 a.m., along with a continental breakfast. The tournament starts at 10 a.m. with a shotgun start. Lunch and refreshments will be on the course. A post golf reception with awards and silent auction and raffles will be held after playing is through.

The outing provides a major source of funds for the Foundation's work throughout the year. If you would like more information on the events or to RSVP your participation, call the office at 732-335-0033 ext. 100., or visit www.njvvmf.org and click on the "events" button.

Veterans Outreach Campaign schedule

The DMAVA Veterans Outreach Campaign has kiosk displays at malls throughout the state and other special events to help veterans and their family members discover and apply for the benefits they are eligible to receive.

July 30 First Energy State Park, Lakewood**
Lakewood Blue Claws Veterans Appreciation Night

August 29 TD Bank Ballpark, Bridgewater**
Somerset Patriots Veterans of America Day

**Outreach events only

Sept. 7*, 8, 9 Willowbrook Mall

Oct. 5*, 6, 7 Brunswick Square Mall

*Medal ceremony 10:30 a.m.