

DMAVA Highlights

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State's newest Blue Star marker unveiled at Vineland Home



Left to right, Joe Romano, Vineland Home CEO, Walter Wengel, Bea Allen, Blue Star Committee chairperson, and Charlie Kinsky unveil the newest Blue Star marker in New Jersey.

By Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

Hundreds of markers, thousands of miles of highway, honoring millions of service men and women – all started with a small program, the Blue Star Drive, here in New Jersey 65 years ago.

On Nov. 6, the New Jersey had its newest Blue Star Memorial Highway marker dedicated at the Vineland Veterans Home; the occasion also marked the 65th anniversary of the Blue Star Drive program.

The Garden Club of New Jersey and the State Highway Commission (pre-cursor to the Dept. of Transportation) had an “inspired idea,” in 1944 according to then-Governor Walter E. Edge. They had the foresight to start a living memorial for the veterans

of World War II. The program was to beautify five miles of Route 29 (now Route 22) between Mountainside and North Plainfield. Not only would no billboards be permitted on that stretch of highway, and the club raised money to plant flowering dogwoods along the road.

The road would be named the Blue Star Drive after the flags that hung in the windows of families who had members serving on active duty; a tradition that continues to the present day.

The program was adopted by the National Council of Garden Clubs during their semi-annual meeting in New York City in October 1945 and has grown to the 50 states and covers thousands of miles of roads, National cemeteries, parks, veteran’s facilities and gardens. It has also expanded to honor all men and women who have served, are serving or would serve in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Vineland Veterans Home auditorium was the scene of the dedication of the newest New Jersey marker. With residents, staff and many guests in the audience, the Vineland Facility Choir, Delsea Regional High School Junior ROTC, local legislators and the N.J. Blue Star Memorial Highway Council dedicated the marker and celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Blue Star program.

Next, everyone went outside to the unveiling of the marker. Vineland Home residents Walter Wengel and Charlie Kinsky helped pull the cloth down to reveal the new marker that overlooks the stone planters with their colorful plantings that stand guard over the circular paved area in the center. In the grassy area around the site are numerous young trees waiting to grow and shade the memorial and its guests.

Joe Romano, CEO of Vineland Home, was very enthusiastic about the newest “resident” of the home. He said that the residents had a great time watching the progress of its building. “It will be a great place for residents and their families to come and sit and relax,” he added.

Medals presented to N.J. Vets on their special day

By Sgt. Wayne Woolley, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

It was the uniform that caught her eye.

World War II had begun and Stefanie Siwulec was nearing college graduation the first time she saw a woman wearing the crisp blue uniform of the U.S. Navy WAVES.

“I thought ‘I want to wear that uniform too,’” Siwulec recalled recently. “I want to serve my country.”

Serve she did. Siwulec joined the WAVES, the acronym for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, after graduating from the University of Michigan and served in both World War II and Korea. She left the Navy Reserve as a lieutenant after the second war ended.

Siwulec, now 89, was among 36 Veterans who were recognized for their service with state honors at a ceremony on Veterans

Day at the Seabrook Village retirement community in Tinton Falls. Siwulec was the only woman.

The awards were presented by Stephen G. Abel, the retired colonel who serves as the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs. The medal recipients had all served in World War II, Korea or Vietnam. All of the medal recipients were residents of Seabrook Village.

Two of recipients had been prisoners of war. One of them, Howard B. Smith Jr., an infantry officer who was captured and held by the Germans, said the hardest part of being a captive was being taken out of the fight.

“I hated that part the most,” Smith said. “I always felt that we have a great country and one worth fighting for.”

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Doyle Cemetery holds Veterans Day ceremony by new area

By Maj. Yvonne Mays, Public Affairs Officer

The newly constructed Columbarium and Public Assembly located in Section P of the William C. Doyle cemetery served as the backdrop for the cemetery's annual Veterans Day program. Retired Col. Stephen Abel, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs in his opening comments remarked that Doyle Cemetery is the "Crown Jewel" of state cemeteries as it remains the busiest state cemetery in the nation conducting more than twenty internments daily.

Frank Salvas Sr., Director, State Cemetery Grants Service, National Cemetery Administration echoed this sentiment as he commented on the dignity and respect that is shown to our nations veterans as they are laid to rest on the pristine 225 acres that make up Doyle Cemetery.

The Adjutant General and keynote speaker, Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth flanked by New Jersey Army and Air National Guardsmen thanked the Veterans from wars past and present and their families who were in attendance for their sacrifice and service to this great state and nation.



Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth (left to right), The Adjutant General of New Jersey; Frank K. Salvas Sr., Director State Cemetery Grants Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs unveil the plaque dedicating the new 3,200 niche Columbarium and public assembly area was dedicated as part of the State of New Jersey's annual Veteran's Day ceremony at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Cemetery on Nov. 11. The ceremony included a flag Retirement Service, wherein the ashes of 2,147 flags were entombed. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, Public Affairs Office.

DMAVA Green

By Tech Sgt. Barb Harbison, DMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

Here are some interesting facts, Web sites to visit and a few things to build.

Looking for plans to build a solar powered generator? Visit <http://www.rain.org/~philfear/how2solar.html>.

If every U.S. home eliminated paper bills, we would cut solid waste by 1.6 billion tons a year. (Earth911.com)

The EPA estimates that 45 percent of all scrap tires are burned for energy, also known as tire-derived fuel (TDF). Since the average tire contains five gallons of oil, they can generate comparable energy to crude oil or coal. (Earth911.com)

Electricity production is the leading cause of industrial air pollution in the United States, and is responsible for 40 percent of the nation's carbon emissions that contribute to global climate change. (Worldwatch Institute, 2007)

How about warming up your swimming pool? You can find plans for a pool solar heater at <http://www.greenpool.tk/>. Cost is around \$100.

The next time you need to replace a product for your home or office, consider choosing one that has earned the government's ENERGY STAR. Energy-efficient choices can save families about a third on their energy bill with similar savings of greenhouse gas emissions, without sacrificing style or comfort. (EPA.gov)

If all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars per year! (EPA, 2008)

About 75 percent of the water we use in our homes is used in the bathroom. (California Energy Commission, 2006)

Interested in recycling your old electronic equipment? The EPA has a web page that has suggestions on how to recycle, donate and reduce your use of electronics. www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/materials/ecycling/index.htm

Keep Green!

Quotes

My life is in the hands of any fool who makes me lose my temper.

--Joseph Hunter

All that we do is done with an eye to something else.

--Aristotle

Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others.

--Sir Winston Churchill

Fortune does not change men; it unmasks them.

--Suzanne Necker

DMAVA Highlights is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the National Guard, the Veterans Affairs or the state of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJD-DMAVA, DMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, PO Box 340, Trenton NJ 08625-0340. E-mail at pao@njdmava.state.nj.us.

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth – The Adjutant General

Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff

Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs

Maj. Yvonne Mays – Public Affairs Officer

Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison – Public Affairs Specialist

Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist

Wounded Soldier and Family
Hotline
1-800-984-8523

Families

Dates set for Strong Bonds, Marriage Enrichment weekends

For those Soldiers who recently returned from deployment – how about a great weekend to “reconnect” with your spouse? Why not try Strong Bonds AKA Marriage Enrichment? The critiques are 99 percent positive over all on the effect the weekend has had with insight to marriages. This is NOT a counseling weekend.

Upcoming weekends will be Feb. 12-14, April 9-11 and May 14-16.

This is for couples who have not had the opportunity to attend in the past. If you are interested, contact Marie Durling at marie.durling@us.army.mil, or 609-530-6884 for an application form.



Registration Forms will be checked to see if you did attend previously. If you attended over two years ago, you may fill one out for the waiting list. With the return of the IBCT, we want to make sure the soldiers who have not attended have the opportunity to do so.

Soldiers are required to attend the entire weekend and ALL sessions in order to receive a SUTA certificate. Dress code is casual for the entire weekend. We do not provide child care. This is a couples' weekend.

More information will be mailed to you approximately 30 days before your event weekend with details.

Military and family members: health insurance questions should be directed to:
Tricare – Sgt. 1st Class Louis Tuck, 609-562-0865
US Family Health Plans – Pam Worley, 732-977-8531
VA Medical – Michelle Stefanelli, 973-676-1000, ext. 1727

State Family Programs

101 Eggert Crossing Road, Lawrenceville
Toll-free number 1-888-859-0352
Family Assistance – 609-530-6834/6884
State Youth Coordinator – 609-530-6836
Military Family Life consultants – 609-530-6835/6886
Yellow Ribbon Program – 609-530-6846/6853/6859
Military OneSource 1-800-342-9647; NJ 609-530-6867
Fax – 609-530-6871

College and career night set for Guard, families

Looking to start school? Career Guidance? A Job?

The New Jersey Army National Guard Education Center is hosting a College and Career Night at Joint Force Headquarters, Building 3650 at Fort Dix, in Conference Room A, on Tuesday, November 17, 2009, at 6 p.m. A short Education Benefits Briefing will be conducted along with 10 minute presentations from each organization.

Representatives for each organization will also be available for one-on-one questions and answer sessions.

This is a great opportunity to learn about the Post 9/11 GI Bill, how to transfer GI Bill Benefits to dependents, get set up for college courses, and for information about civilian employment.

Representatives from Thomas Edison State College, Pierce College, Roger Williams University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Tip of the Arrow Foundation will be available to answer questions about college, careers, and jobs. All Army and Air Guard members -- and spouses -- are welcome.

For more information please contact Captain Ben Stoner, Education Benefits Manager at 609-562-0975/0711 or email at benjamin.stoner@us.army.mil.

November is National Alzheimer's Month

November is National Alzheimer's Month. Here are a few statistics:

- 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's
- Every 70 seconds someone in America develops Alzheimer's disease
- Alzheimer's, now the fifth leading killer, rose 47% from 2000 to 2006
- 54% of the U.S. population has been touched in some way by Alzheimer's

Teaneck FRG shows calendar

From the desk of Janis M. Shaw, Family Assistance Center

The upcoming Teaneck FRG/FAC meetings are Nov. 12 and Dec. 17 at 7 p.m.

Teaneck FRG Mardi Gras/Tricky Tray and BeefSteak will be held Nov 20 at the Teaneck armory. Tickets are \$4; time is 7-11 p.m.

Check out Blue Star Flag Program

Grantham University's Blue Star Flag program has been providing Blue Star Flags to Service members and their families since 2006. Grantham University is also offering scholarships and grants to Servicemembers and veterans. For further information about the Blue Star Flag program, please go to: <http://www.mybluestar-flag.com>.

State Employees

DMAVA Holiday party, Town Hall slated for Dec. 11 - time to make your reservations!

The 2009 DMAVA/JFHQ Town Hall and Holiday Party will be held on Dec. 11. The town hall meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. and the meal will be served at noon.

Cost for the party is \$12; \$20 at the door and only 35 tickets will be sold at the door. Payment due date is Dec. 4. This is an employee-only event.

The menu will be catered by Amici Milano's. Raffle tickets for a flat screen TV and 50/50 tickets will be sold before and after the town hall meeting. Proceeds will be donated to the DMAVA Family Readiness Program.

Attendance at the Town Hall meeting is mandatory and those who chose not to attend the holiday party must return to their regular duty station as it is a normal and full workday.

If you are interested in attending, give your money to one of the following: DMAVA – Darlene Laarz, 609-530-6992; Karen Hansen, 609-530-6868; Dawn Baulo, 609-530-6717 or Tina Taylor, 609-530-7170. Fort Dix – Master Sgt. Barbara Alcott, 609-562-0870; and HSCOE – Kevin Hearn, 609-530-7069.

Safely toss out unwanted medicines Nov. 14

From the desk of Katheryn Wierzbicki, Quality Assurance Coordinator

Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey will be held in close to 450 communities throughout New Jersey between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., on Nov. 14. This initiative is available for all New Jersey residents to properly dispose of their unused, unwanted, and expired prescription and over-the-counter medicine. Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey is a statewide initiative that is the first of its kind in the nation. This statewide effort is being spearheaded by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, DEA New Jersey Division, and the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ. Local collection site information can be found at www.operation-medicinecabinetnj.com.



Holiday Mail for Heroes program launches for 2009

In this season of hope and giving the American Red Cross and Pitney Bowes, Inc. have joined forces to invite Americans to “send a touch of home” to United States service members and veterans across the country and abroad. In its third year, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program is an opportunity to share joy and thanks with our service members throughout the holiday season by way of a greeting card.

Today more than 1.4 million men and women serve in the U.S. armed forces and over 24 million veterans have served in the past. The holiday season is the perfect time to honor and extend a warm holiday greeting to those who've served and continue to do so.

How Holiday Mail works

We have established an extensive process to ensure all cards sent to our service members are safe and arrive in time for the holidays. Holiday cards will be collected through a unique P.O. Box address from Nov. 2 through Dec. 7.

First, cards from across the nation **must** be sent to this address:

Holiday Mail for Heroes

P.O. Box 5456

Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Every card received will be screened for hazardous materials by Pitney Bowes and distributed to participating Red Cross chapters nationwide. Once the cards arrive at the Red Cross chapters, they are sorted and reviewed by volunteers who then distribute them to service members, their families and veterans in communities across the country.

Please don't forget to follow these guidelines while preparing your holiday greetings!

Do...

- Sign all cards
- Entitle cards “Dear Service Member, Family or Veteran”
- Send holiday-neutral cards rather than those with religious themes
- Limit cards to 15 per person or 50 for school class or business group
- Bundle groups of cards in single, large envelopes

Don't...

- Send letters
- Include personal information such as home or email addresses
- Use glitter – excessive amounts can aggravate health issues of wounded recipients
- Include inserts of any kind as they must be removed in the screening process

Veterans & Military

Federal government working to hire more vets

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 10, 2009 - President Barack Obama signed an executive order this week aimed at hiring more veterans to work in the federal government.

The order calls on each federal agency to establish a veterans employment program office designed to help veterans get through the maze of paperwork as they apply for positions in the federal work force and mandates that agencies train personnel specialists on veteran employment policies.

It calls on agencies to work with the Defense Department and VA to develop and apply technologies designed to help disabled veterans.

A smaller steering committee will focus on the kinds of employment opportunities available to veterans and the assistance that they need to transition from the military to federal civilian jobs.

Marilee Fitzgerald, acting deputy undersecretary of defense for civilian personnel policy, said the executive order is intended to promote and showcase opportunities for veterans. "The idea is to generate attention to the skills and capabilities that our men and women in the military possess," she said.

The Defense Department has 750 career fields and employs about 350,000 veterans. "We're very fortunate in the Defense Department to understand how good our veterans are and how they train, what they do, and other federal agencies don't," Fitzgerald said. "The idea is to ensure we can leverage and coordinate our efforts across the federal entity to ensure they become as acquainted with our veterans as the Department of Defense." The directors of the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget have placed special emphasis on improving the federal hiring process, Fitzgerald said, and the veterans initiative will benefit from that.

Noel Koch, deputy undersecretary of defense for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said the executive order will make it easier for disabled veterans to gain federal employment. Medical advances have changed just what a disability is in the United States today, he noted.

Holiday party for Essex Troop on Dec. 12

The Essex Troop and Iron Horsemen Associations cordially invite you to join in a holiday celebration on Dec. 12 at Zeris Restaurant, Route 46 (East) Mountain Lakes.

There will be a "Meet and Greet" starting at 6:30 p.m. with wine, beer and cheese (cash bar for mixed drinks). A buffet dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. – wine, beer and soda are included. Cost is \$35 per person.

For those who may want to stay over there is a discount rate of \$72 plus tax for Saturday night, Dec. 12 accommodations and breakfast at the Fairfield Marriot Inn, 3535 US Hwy 46 East (973-265-0095). The hotel is located at the corner of Route 46 E and Cherry Hill Rd. 1 mile east of Zeris Restaurant. Make your own reservation and mention The Essex Troop Association by Dec. 1.

Vietnam Ed Center to host filmmaker on Nov. 21

On Nov. 21 at 3 p.m., the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation will host a presentation of the film *Mechanic to Millionaire: The Peter Cooper Story*. This program will be held at the Vietnam Era Educational Center in Holmdel. Directed and produced by Janet Gardner of the Gardner Documentary Group, the film highlights the life of Peter Cooper (1791-1883), famous for his inventions including gelatin desserts, the first American steam locomotive, and the first iron I-beam used in railroad rails and skyscrapers. The film will be introduced and followed by a discussion led by Gardner. Janet Gardner is an award-winning director who has previously screened films at the Educational Center including *The Last Ghost of War*, a movie about Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Lecture attendees are asked to RSVP to 732-335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested. The Vietnam Era Educational Center is located adjacent to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116.

Concert at Clifton High School honors veterans, American flag

Veterans are invited to the Clifton High School on Nov. 24 at 7 p.m. for a Salute to the Veterans Concert. This year the concert will be honoring the flag of the United States. The Silver Starlite Orchestra will be featured.

During this special tribute to veterans and their families, veterans who attend the concert are asked to report to the welcome wagon upon arrival for a token of appreciation. At the concert's conclusion, veterans are asked to bring their family and friends to the canteen to continue the celebration.

Cost of admission to the event is non-perishable food items. The school is located at 333 Colfax Ave., Clifton.

Veterans Organizations contact information

State Veterans Service Council
 Richard Clark, RJClark21@msn.com
 BG William C. Doyle Cemetery Advisory Council
 William Rakestraw, warjrj@msn.com
 Veterans Hotlines
 Benefits and Entitlements
 1-888-8NJ-VETS (1-888-865-8387)
 Mental Health
 1-866-VETS-NJ4 (1-866-838-7654)

Calendar

Runners invited to Fort Hamilton 5K Veterans Outreach Campaign schedule

Attention runners...if you missed the New York City marathon here your chance to redeem yourself at the Fort Hamilton 5K Turkey Trot on Nov. 14.

Registration is Nov. 14, 8:30-9 a.m. and the race starts at 10 a.m. Cost is free.

There will be refreshments after the race. Awards will be given to the first, second and third place winners in each age group.

For more information, contact Fort Hamilton Sports and Fitness, 718-630-4830/4793.

Register for Guard/Reserve retirement seminar Dec. 5

Mark your calendars for a free seminar on Reserve and Guard retirement benefits. It will be held on Dec. 5 at the Timmerman Center, building 5441, 8th Ave., Fort Dix, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is for all Guard, reserve, retirees and spouses.

If you are unsure of what benefits are available to you while you are waiting to receive your retirement check – if you are a “gray area” retiree – this is the seminar for you.

Presenters at the seminar will include military service centers, Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, and various military transition organizations that will cover topics from a Guard/Reserve perspective.

If you are interested in attending, contact Chief Everett Currie at 757-444-7295, ext. 2005 or e-mail Everett.currie@navy.mil.

MTA running train for USMC Toys for Tots Dec. 12-13

On Dec. 12-13, the Military Transport Association (MTA) will run a special train in Northern New Jersey to collect donated toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. Along the route, the train will stop at ten locations where members of the public can drop off toys, board the train to see Santa Claus, experience a variety of working railroad equipment, and meet members of the Marine Corps and MTA.

Members of the public are encouraged to drop off new, unwrapped toys at various collection points along the route in the first two weeks of December. At each stop, one or more businesses or organizations has a large collection box. The web site, <http://www.njoperationtoytrain.com>, lists all the toy drop-off locations and the schedule for the train.

The train will stop in Flanders, Ledgewood, Dover, and Rockaway, Maywood, Hawthorne, Wortendyke (Midland Park), Wyckoff, Franklin Lakes, Pompton Lakes, and Butler.

The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November, and December each year and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community where the campaign is conducted. The Toys-for-tots website is: www.njtoys-fortots.org.

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.

January 5*, 6, 7 Cherry Hill Mall

February 2*, 3, 4 Monmouth Mall

*Medal ceremony at 10:30 a.m.

Book fair being held at Picatinny Arsenal Dec. 8

Come enjoy the Books Are Fun book fair held at Picatinny Arsenal Building 34 (by the conference room), Choices Cafeteria on Dec. 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

With over 250 great titles at unbelievable prices, you are sure to find something for everyone on your list!

Categories include: children's story books, cookbooks, general interest books, New York Times best sellers, stationery and scrapbooking, music collections, gifts for all ages, early learning products and children's educational products.

First run, top quality products from the world's leading publishers.

Sixers offer Guard nights with “cheap seats”

The Philadelphia 76ers are holding two New Jersey National Guard nights. Come watch the Sixers in the Wachovia Center.

Nov. 13 the Sixers are playing the Utah Jazz and Dec. 9 they are playing the Detroit Pistons. Ticket prices are \$30 for lower level corners and \$15 for mezzanine center.

To reserve your tickets, fax the order to 215-339-7658, attention Dave Reed, corporate sales manager. Or call 215-218-7822 or e-mail dreed@comcast-spectacor.com.

For more information, contact Marie Durling at 609-530-6884 or e-mail marie.durling@nj.ngb.army.mil.

Deadline

Want to place an event or article in DMAVA Highlights?

Deadline for articles is noon Wednesday.

Send submissions to barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us.