

DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



FEBRUARY 9, 2011



Phillie Phanatic hits homerun!

EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

NGANJ 2011 state conference

The National Guard Association of New Jersey is pleased to invite you to the 2011 State Conference to be held at the Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, N.J., on Apr. 8-10.

During the conference, the NGANJ will be electing a new slate of Association officer on Friday night Apr. 8.

In addition, on Saturday Apr. 9, a professional development training will be held there for any active NJNG officers.

Registration documents for both the conference and hotel rooms can be obtained by visiting their Website at <http://www.ngang.org> or contacting the NGANJ by E-mail at nganj@aol.com.

The host command - 57th Troop Command - has put together a great program that will include additional hotel/casino in-house activities that will be both entertaining and enjoyable.

If you know of a company or organization that may want to support the NGANJ and their activities and would be willing to help the NGANJ meet their National Guard Support efforts, please visit <http://www.nganj.org/publications.htm> for some literature and publications.

National Guard Militia Museum calls for OEF/OIF artifacts

The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey is collecting photographs, correspondence, and artifacts related to the N.J. National Guard's participation in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The goal of the museum is to tell the story of the more than two centuries of National Guard service in the United States.

Furthermore, the museum is in the process of improving their permanent exhibits and to significantly expand the museum's collection of objects related to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The museum is located at the National Guard Training Center, Sea Girt, N.J.

Individuals interested in donating or lending artifacts to the museum are encouraged to contact 1st Lt. Vincent Solomano, museum curator and historian for the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey, via Email at vincent.solomano@us.army.mil or by phone at 732- 974-5966.

On the cover - The Phillie Phanatic gives Linville Daws a smooch. The Phillie Phanatic and Millville native Mike Trout, the top Major League Baseball prospect, visited the residents of the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home on Feb. 7, 2011. (Photo by Mark C. Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA)

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, Veterans Affairs or the state of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJDMAVA, DMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, PO Box 340, Trenton NJ 08625-0340. E-mail at pao@njdmava.state.nj.us.

Local HLA chapter reaching out to veterans

The Hearing Loss Association of Ocean/Monmouth Counties is pleased to invite you to their monthly chapter meetings held on the first Sunday of the month at the Center for Healthy Living, which is located at 198 Prospect Street in Lakewood, N.J.

The HLAOMC is a non-profit support group that represents people with hearing loss. They provide assistance and resources for people with hearing loss and their families to learn how to adjust to living with hearing loss. They are reaching out to all veterans who are suffering from hearing loss.

Meetings are free and open to the general public. This is also a rewarding way to spend a few hours socializing with other hard of hearing individuals who share your problems and concerns.

The following events are on the Association's monthly calendar:

Mar. 6 – Getting the most of your telephone conversations – guest speaker: Joel Strasser

Apr. 3 – Adjusting to your hearing aid – guest speaker: Bob Di-sogra

May 1 – “Better Hearing Month” – Veterans and Hearing Loss Meetings are usually from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Light refreshments will be served, but you are free to bring your favorite dessert to share.

For further information about HLAOMC and their monthly chapter meetings, please contact Joleen Marsillo at 732-657-1561 or via Email at oceanmonmouthhla@yahoo.com.

Veterans Outreach Schedule

March 1-3

Jersey Gardens Mall

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Medal Ceremony at 10:30a.m. on Tuesday, March 1

Kiosk hours: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

651 Kapowski Road, Elizabeth, NJ 07201

April 7

New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland

Medal Ceremony only in Auditorium starting at 1:30p.m.

524 North West Boulevard, Vineland, NJ 08360

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth – The Adjutant General
Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff
Raymond Zawacki – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs
CW2 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer
Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez - Public Affairs Specialist
Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist

Airman marches, low-crawls and sweats her way into history: Part three

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria, 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force - Iraq Public Affairs

BAGHDAD -- What are you doing, Judy Benjamin? Senior Airman Courtney Beard, a New Jersey Air National Guard member, dropped her gear and was convinced she was done. 1st Sgt. Brian McCutcheon, United States Forces - Iraq, A Company first sergeant, and others advised her not to give up and waste the past 14 hours of her life.

"If she completed this grueling challenge then she could use this as a foundation for any points in her life or career when something appeared to be bigger than the individual," Sergeant McCutcheon said. "Finishing the Spur Ride would forever be proof that she could attack any obstacle head on and be successful."

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy P. Livengood, III Corps Special Troops Battalion, even yelled at her, calling her Judy Benjamin, a character from the movie "Private Benjamin" and one of the many nicknames the Brooklyn, N.Y., native was given along the way, that she wasn't done and to pick up her gear.

"I picked up all my gear and put it back on," Airman Beard said. "I wanted to see if I really had what it took to finish."

As the journey continued, Airman Beard walked past the Perfume Palace where she works every day.

"This only made me dream of where I would be if I hadn't signed up for the Spur Ride," she said.

Upon arrival at the sniper hill location on Camp Slayer, Iraq, the participants entered a scenario with explosions and enemy fire. They had to run from the beginning to the end of the lane hitting the ground for any and all incoming fire. They also had to evacuate "injured" Soldiers and perform simulated first-aid once they got to the bottom of the hill.

Now they had to get up the hill, but they had to rush to the top doing up-downs.

"I was extremely exhausted by this point," she said. "By the time they said 'I'm down,' I was barely getting up."

Airmen Beard said she let go of every muscle in her body and dropped to the ground to make sure she was doing it right.

"Unfortunately, I didn't do it well enough" she said. "We were sent back to the bottom of the hill to try again."

She made it up this time but with a little help.

"I was very thankful for my teammates at this point," Airman Beard said. "One of them kept a hold of my camel pack and jerked

me up the hill each time we were told to get up."

As they made their way down the hill, they were sent back up to look for a few Soldiers that were lost. After the Soldiers were found, they came back down and encountered a few more physical tests.

"We had to hold our weapons over our head non-stop," she said. "Then we marched to the fire station and pulled security."

They eventually made their way back to the motor pool, where they started the day 17 hours earlier, to begin the last portion of the Spur Ride. This part was dedicated to all of the fallen military members in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We were divided into teams and carried one person each around the motor pool," Airman Beard said. "We did one lap of every thousand that have fallen since the beginning of the war."

The Spur Ride concluded with Sergeant Major Livengood recognizing the efforts of the 27 participants that finished. He also expressed how thankful he was for their service.

There was food waiting for them and at this moment Airman Beard felt like one of the boys.

"I felt like a true Soldier," she said. "I just picked up my food and ate it with my hands without a care in the world."

Airmen Beard once again heard music, this time it was the song "American Soldier," and emotions took over the 22 year old.

"After a long day that was full of physical and mental stress, all I could do was let the tears fall from my eyes."

How it all ended... Relief was the only thing Airman Beard could think about after the 18 hour Spur Ride was over.

As with all Spur Rides, those that complete it get recognized at a dining-in and, like the day before, Airman Beard was the lone female Airman in a crowd of male Soldiers.

"The dinner was the perfect remedy for what the previous day was full of," she said. "It was very rewarding but also overwhelming to be in crowd that was all Army and all male."

Airman Beard explained that it took weeks for her to realize what



"I felt like a true Soldier. I just picked up my food and ate it with my hands without a care in the world."

Senior Airman Courtney Beard, a Brooklyn, N.Y. native and a New Jersey Air National Guard member.

SEE AIRMAN, PAGE 4

U.S. Army National Guard to join GoArmyEd in June

Effective June 2011, U.S. Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers will begin the transition to GoArmyEd, the Army's enterprise education system that will serve both components as a Virtual Gateway to Education—Anytime, Anywhere.

GoArmyEd currently supports active duty and Army reservists as a one-stop Web site that allows Soldiers, Army education counselors, and schools to conduct business for all education needs in a seamless Soldier-centric environment.

June's transition realizes the Army's vision for an enterprise system serving all Army components.

GoArmyEd will give you 24/7 online access to register for classes, access to your counselor, school, or the GoArmyEd Helpdesk, and many self-service features that put you in the driver's seat as you plan for and pursue your education goals.

In addition, you will be able to identify courses that advance you toward your degree and view your tuition assistance (TA) balance for the year.

You'll also be able to review your individual degree plan, student record, course history, grades, and other information necessary to reach your goals.

Furthermore, the GoArmyEd portal will enable you to withdraw from classes or request military withdrawals, resolve recoupments and holds, and request reimbursements for courses not offered through the portal... all online.

So, what do you need to do?

At this time, nothing is required of you



other than reading this message, which is intended to give you advance notice of the exciting changes affecting the way you access your TA benefits.

GoArmyEd will be sending out invitations for you to set-up an account in June, which will include detailed directions to support your transition.

Key milestone dates to be aware of are:

June 4, 2011 – Schools with historical ARNG enrollments set-up in GoArmyEd; ARNG Soldiers begin setting up accounts in GoArmyEd; after completing their account set-ups, ARNG Soldiers will be restricted from requesting TA in GoArmyEd until Aug. 1.

Aug. 1, 2011 – ARNG Soldiers begin requesting TA in GoArmyEd for courses that start on or after Oct. 1. ARNG Soldiers will continue to use the current National Guard

system to request courses that start prior to Oct. 1.

Oct. 1, 2011 – All ARNG Soldiers and Army education personnel begin using GoArmyEd to manage TA for courses that start on or after Oct. 1; schools using GoArmyEd receive TA requests, process grades, and submit invoices for courses that start on or after Oct. 1; the current National Guard education system is used only for grade reporting, invoicing, and recoupment processing for courses that started prior to Oct. 1.

If you currently have an active GoArmyEd account simply continue to use the system based on your current eligibility. Additional communications will be sent in 2011. Good luck in your current studies, and thank you for your service!

AIRMAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

she had accomplished.

“It took a few people recognizing me and congratulating me on what I did for me to realize how big a deal it really was,” she said.

Airman Beard was asked by the III Corps commander to cross over into the Army. Another Soldier told her that she needed to look into the “blue to green” program, which allows Airmen to transfer to the Army.

“It was after all of these encouraging words that I realized what I had accom-

plished,” she said. “Although, I feel that no one will ever really understand what those 18 hours were really like unless they were actually there for every minute.”

But there was still more. One of the traditions at a military dining-in calls for spur recipients to drink from the “grog.” The “grog” included a mixture of the mud they had crawled through the previous day, vinegar, tobacco sauce and an entire can of tobacco dip.

“I spent the whole night dreading this moment,” Airman Beard said. “I decided that just straight downing it without stop-

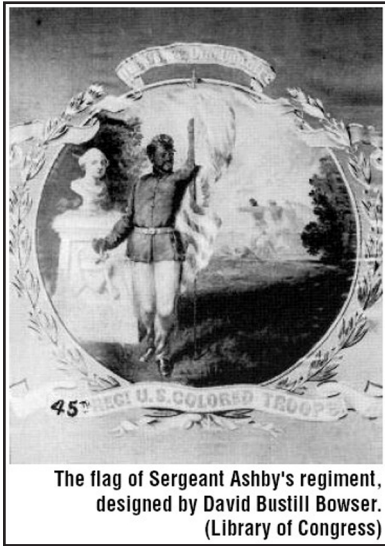
ping would be my best bet.”

She downed the “grog” and was presented her Spur Ride certificate by Sergeant McCutcheon. Airman Beard left that night with her stomach feeling queasy but with her head held high.

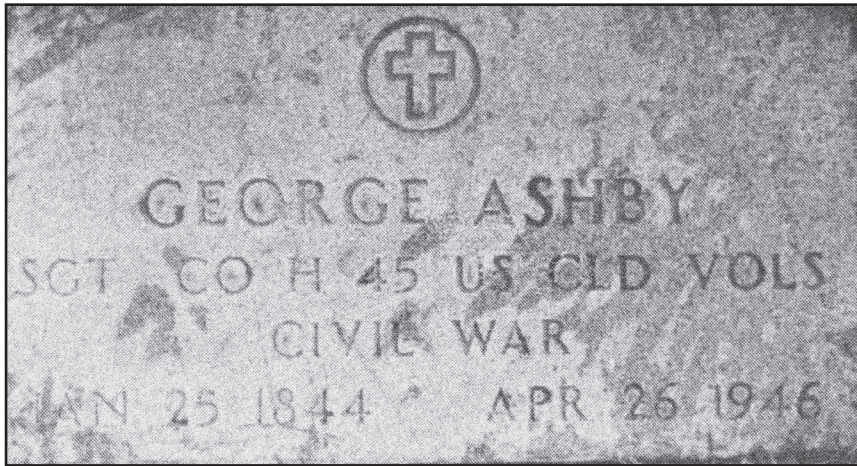
“Completing the Spur Ride means a lot to me,” she said. “I still look back and think about all the Soldiers that couldn’t complete the challenge but, not me, I did it.”

Editor’s Note: This is part three of a three part series about Airman Beard and her Spur Ride experience.

Celebrating historical NJ figures during Black History Month



The flag of Sergeant Ashby's regiment, designed by David Bustill Bowser. (Library of Congress)



Grave marker of 1st Sergeant George Ashby, New Jersey's last surviving Civil War veteran, who died in 1946. (Photo courtesy of: Joe Bilby, assistant curator for National Guard Militia Museum of NJ.)

George Ashby was born in Burlington, N.J. on Jan. 25, 1844. In 1864, Ashby, an African American then living in Crosswicks, enlisted as a private in the 45th United States Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn outside of Philadelphia between June and August of 1864. He served in Virginia during the siege of Petersburg and was present for the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House in April, 1865. At the end of hostilities, the 45th, with a large number of other federal troops, was transferred to Texas on occupation duty. While serving with his regiment, Ashby was promoted several times until he reached the rank of first sergeant of Company H.

Sergeant Ashby was mustered out of the service at Philadelphia with the 45th USCI on November 1865 and returned to his life as a New Jersey small farmer. In January 1944 a reporter interviewed the old veteran, who predicted an allied victory in World War II and stated that if he could, he would “enlist all over again.” When George Ashby died in Allentown, N.J. on Apr. 29, 1946, he was the last surviving New Jersey Civil War veteran. He is buried in Allentown.

This article was derived from “Forgotten Warriors: New Jersey’s African American Soldiers in the Civil War” by author Joseph G. Bilby.



Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, left, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, congratulates Sgt. Brian Mandelko after presenting him the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal at an award ceremony in Quaker Bridge Mall on Feb. 8. In the background from left to right are Albert Bucchi, Director of Veterans Services, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; State Senator Linda Greenstein, State Assemblymen Wayne DeAngelo and Daniel Benson. Twenty-two veterans from mostly Burlington and Mercer counties who had served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom were honored at the ceremony. Photo by Mark C. Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.