



# DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

April 19, 2013

## NJNG Airman Earns Bronze Star, Purple Heart



*Tech. Sgt. Michael Sears, left, is awarded the Bronze Star by Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, The Adjutant General, at a ceremony April 17, 2013 at the State House in Trenton, N.J. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)*



### *Sears heroic actions under enemy fire helps fellow members survive attack*

*Story by Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA*

When an explosive ordnance disposal team rolls out for a combat patrol, their objective is to defuse bombs and gather intelligence about the bomb-makers. It's not to engage the enemy.

But as New Jersey Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Mike Sears put it, sometimes, there's no choice. Sept. 29, 2012 was one of those days.

A three-man Air Force EOD team led by Sears found itself in the middle of a complex ambush on a dusty road in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. Over the course of a two-hour firefight, Sears provided life-saving aid to a fallen coalition soldier from Poland; ran five times through a 150-yard open area riddled with enemy machine gun fire to direct his team in returning fire; and continued on with the fight even after being knocked temporarily unconscious by a rocket-propelled grenade blast.

On Wednesday, Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, The Adjutant General, awarded Sears the Bronze Star and Purple Heart at a ceremony at the State House in Trenton.

In an interview, Sears, 36, credited his Afghan team, Staff Sgt. John Hurley, a fellow member of the 177th Fighter Wing, and Staff Sgt. Josh Jerden, an active duty Airman, with fighting hard to allow them all to survive the ambush.

On the day of the attack, Sear's team had been on patrol with

a team of 90 Polish infantrymen and sappers, also known as combat engineers or soldiers who perform various military engineering duties. They had come across a massive improvised explosive device packed with 80 pounds of explosives. After Sears had investigated, Hurley used a robot to detonate the device. Sears went back to ensure the bomb had been defeated and instead found two more devices triggered by "pressure plates. He was able to diffuse them on his own and collect evidence to be used to try to identify their manufacturer.

Evidence collected, Sears's team and the Polish unit were preparing to return to their base when they came under machine gun and rifle fire. After a short lull, an RPG round whistled past their vehicle, missing Hurley by two feet and hitting a Polish vehicle, clearly badly injuring one of the Polish soldiers, a sapper Sears had grown close to during the deployment.

"I saw that RPG coming, but there was nothing we could do but hold on and pray," Sears said.

See, *SEARS*, on Pg. 2

## HIGHLIGHTS

# SEARS

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When he realized the RPG had badly injured his friend, Sears took off through the machine gun fire to provide aid. It was clear that no one from the Polish team knew one of their men had been hit. As he pulled the 250-pound Polish soldier from the truck, Sears felt something in his shoulder tear. What Sears saw next helped him push through his pain. The explosion had severed the Polish soldier's leg.

Sears propped up the Polish Soldier with one arm, returned fire with his M4 and the other and tried to drag him out of the direct enemy fire. Sears helped the soldier to the ground and applied a tourniquet. Bullets were still landing all around them. Sears shielded his buddy with his body.

"People have asked me how long I was on the ground with him and I tell them it felt like an hour with all those rounds coming in," Sears said. "It probably was only a few minutes."

During those minutes, another RPG landed within a few feet of Sears and the Polish soldier. The concussion knocked Sears out. When he came to, Sears knew his buddy needed more help than he could provide. He made another trip through open terrain and under fire to get a Polish medic's attention and get him to the location of the wounded soldier.

Sears made several more trips through that gantlet of fire to get more Polish soldiers and their litter team to the wounded man and another trip to assist his EOD team



as they returned of fire at an enemy that continued to attack from two directions.

Ultimately, two Polish attack helicopters arrived with enough firepower to drive the insurgents away.

The EOD team and Polish convoy drove four miles for a secure location for a medevac helicopter to land. Sears had strongly recommended they not try the medevac at the scene of the ambush.

"My previous experiences had been the sound of a helicopter gets the attention of every bad guy in the area and they're going to try to light it up," he said. "They'd rather take down a helicopter than shoot at us and

on that day; we'd already had one casualty. A downed helicopter would have been a mass casualty we really didn't need."

Sears, the father of three, served as a Marine infantryman on active duty before joining the National Guard.

In civilian life, he works as an explosive ordnance technician for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

On the day of the ambush, Sears expended 190 rounds. The two other members of his team expended even more.

"Our main objective is not to engage the enemy," he said. "But when they come after us, we have the training to respond."

# PATRIOT CONNECTIONS

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and NEWS in NJ, PA and surrounding areas...

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THE USA

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS ONLINE AT;

[WWW.PATRIOTCONNECTIONS.ORG](http://WWW.PATRIOTCONNECTIONS.ORG)



## *NJVVMF Scholarship Program looking for applicants*

Each year the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation awards two (2) scholarships to high school seniors from New Jersey who plan to further their education either at a college, university or trade/technical school.

Winners are notified in early May and awarded the scholarship during the Memorial Day Ceremony held at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.

In addition to the scholarship application and proof of acceptance to a college or trade school, all applicants must submit an essay about his/her visit to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, located off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116 in Holmdel.

Free guided tours of the Memorial are available on Saturdays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., during scholarship season (February through April), to accommodate students submitting a scholarship application.

For more information regarding the scholarship program visit our Website at <http://www.njvvmf.org/>.

To download the scholarship application, please click [HERE](#).



The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey Foundation

## **Sandy Relief Reception**

*Support Our Mission of Preserving Garden State Military History*

**12:00p.m. - 4:00p.m.  
Sunday, May 19, 2013**

**B.P.O.E. Lodge 2534  
17 Stockton Lake Boulevard, Manasquan**

\$20 donation requested, \$150 per table of 10.

Live Entertainment.  
Hot & Cold Appetizers Served. Cash Bar Available.

**All proceeds will be used for the museum's ongoing recovery efforts.**

Questions? Please call (732) 614-6103

The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible.

## **Goodspeed, Soldiers!**



**Senior leadership of the New Jersey National Guard, along with friends and family, gather to salute Soldiers from the Military Advisor Team four at a Salute to Troops ceremony April 18, 2013, at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, N.J. MAT four is a small team of NJNG Soldiers whose primary task is to coach, teach and mentor Afghan National Army units. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, NJDMAVA/PA)**

## NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation Announces Remembrance Day Ceremony

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation will hold its annual New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day ceremony Saturday, May 7 at 11 a.m.

May 7th was created by legislation in 1991 as a unique day in New Jersey to honor all those who served in the military during the Vietnam Era from 1959 to 1975. More than 200,000 New Jersey residents served in the armed forces during that time.

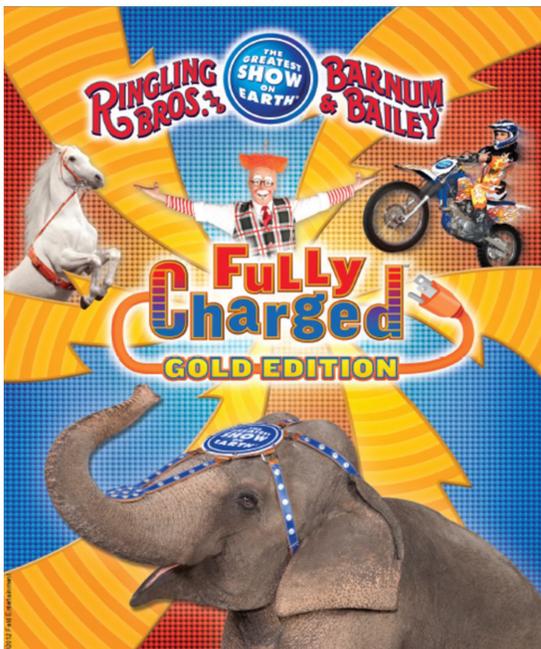
The guest speaker is Brig. Gen. James J. Grant who serves as the Director, Joint Staff – Joint Force Headquarters, New Jersey National Guard. As Director, Grant oversees the training, operations and logistics support for the more than 8,300 members of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, as well directing the day-to-day operations of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. He has responsibility for: Family Support, Fiscal Division, Installations, New Jersey National Guard Training Center located at Sea Girt, Office of Military Affairs, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Grant received his commission as a second lieutenant through the Officer Candidate School in 1982. Prior to receiving his commission, Grant served as an enlisted member in the United States Marine Corps serving from 1973 until 1975.

In addition, during this year's ceremony, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will be awarding a number of New Jersey state medals. These include the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Korean Service Medal and Vietnam Service Medal. (A list of medal recipients is available. Please contact us if you are interested in receiving the list.)

Admission is free for all visitors on May 7, and the Vietnam Era Museum & Educational Center will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Museum is located adjacent to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116 in Holmdel. The Memorial is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Museum & Educational Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information on the Memorial or Educational Center, call 732-335-0033 or visit [www.njvvmf.org](http://www.njvvmf.org).

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation is a non-profit organization, which strives to foster patriotism and recognition of the sacrifices, courage and valor of the New Jersey veterans of the Vietnam Era. Built in 1988, the Memorial is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is adjacent to the Vietnam Era Museum & Educational Center in Holmdel, N.J.

## MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT



### APR 26 7:00pm

(All Access Pre-show starts at 6 PM-FREE with ticket)

# SAVE \$10!

On \$25 Seats

Children 2-12 ONLY \$12

(Excludes Gold Circle and VIP seats)

#### 3 Ways To Buy Tickets:

- At Tobyhanna Army Depot ONE STOP SHOP
- At Box Office w/ Valid Military ID (active, reserve forces, retired)
- Online using code "USA6" at Ticketmaster.com

(\$50 Township Tax Will Be Added. Additional Fees and Service Charges May Apply)

APRIL 25-28

Thu @ 7 PM; Fri @ 7 PM  
Sat @ 1PM & 5 PM; Sun @ 1 PM  
Seats \$80, \$40, \$25



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# HIGHLIGHTS



**2013 Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair – Camden, NJ**  
 Susquehanna Bank Center  
 1 Harbour Boulevard, Camden, NJ 08103  
 April 25, 2013

**HIRING FAIR: 11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.**

**MILITARY TRANSITION WORKSHOP: 8:30 A.M.**

This American Legion- and ESGR-sponsored hiring event is being hosted by the Susquehanna Bank Center and conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Camden County, Board of Freeholders; the Camden County Office of Veterans Affairs; the American Legion Camden County Executive Committee; the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS); New Jersey Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR); the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; the NJ State Parole Board; NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development; NBC News, and other local partners.

<b>EMPLOYERS</b> Must have available jobs. Register for FREE at HOH.Greatjob.net	<b>JOB SEEKERS</b> Veterans, Active Duty Military, Members Of Guard And Reserve Components, Military Spouses Register for FREE at HOH.Greatjob.net WALK-INS WELCOME
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A workshop for veterans and military that focuses on resume writing, tips for successfully navigating hiring fairs, military skill translation, and interviewing will start at 8:30 A.M.

For registration questions, please contact [hiringourheroes@uschamber.com](mailto:hiringourheroes@uschamber.com) or call 202463-5807.



[WWW.HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG](http://WWW.HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG)

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**2013 Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair - NJ BUILDING TRADES HELMETS TO HARDHATS**  
 Bordentown National Guard Armory  
 1048 Route 206 South, Bordentown, NJ 08505  
 THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2013

**HIRING FAIR: 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

This Hiring Our Heroes event is sponsored by the New Jersey State Building & Construction Trades Council/Helmets to Hardhats and NJ Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. It is conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; the Department of Labor Veterans Employment & Training Service (DOL VETS); The American Legion; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; NBC News; NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; NJ State Parole Board; NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and other local partners.

<b>EMPLOYERS</b> Register for FREE at HOH.Greatjob.net	<b>JOB SEEKERS</b> Veterans, Active Duty Military, Members Of Guard And Reserve Components, Military Spouses Register for FREE at HOH.Greatjob.net WALK-INS WELCOME
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Registration questions? Email [hiringourheroes@uschamber.com](mailto:hiringourheroes@uschamber.com) or call 202-463-5807.



[WWW.HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG](http://WWW.HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG)

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**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Serving Those Who Served**  
 Division of Veterans Healthcare Services  
 Division of Veterans Services



**Remember**  
**Honor**

**Comfort**



## NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS Veterans Outreach Campaign

### NJ VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL NJ VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY May \*7

\* Medal Ceremony at 11:00a.m.  
 DMAVA will have an Outreach Table w/VSO present  
 PNC Bank Arts Center, Garden State Pkwy Exit 116, Holmdel  
 (Monmouth County)

**CHERRY HILL MALL**  
 June \*4, 5 & 6  
 \* Medal Ceremony at 11:00a.m. on Tuesday, June 4  
 Kiosk hours 10 a.m. – 8p.m.  
 200 Route 38, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002  
 (Camden County)

# MEMO

## From the Office of the State CIO

On Wednesday, April 17, the Office of Information Technology received a cyber-security bulletin from trusted Federal sources. Criminals are using the bombing of the Boston Marathon as a pretext to steal financial or personal information from personal and business computers. E-mail, social media and websites are all being used to entice potential victims to click on a link that will be used to infect your computer and steal communications, passwords and other sensitive data.

The Office of Information Technology has taken steps to reduce the threat that malware resulting from this attack will reach the State's systems, but we ask you to join us in helping to protect the State.

### **Please follow these guidelines:**

**Never Trust a Link:** If it's not necessary for your work, don't click on links sent to you in emails or on web pages – especially links contained in unsolicited emails. If you must click on emailed links to perform your assigned tasks, ask your supervisor to explain proper procedures for opening links from unfamiliar or suspicious sources.

**Avoid Phishing Scams:** No reputable company, agency or tech support department will ask you to provide your username, password, social security number or other sensitive information in an email. Never send this type of sensitive data to anyone via email.

**Handle Attachments With Care:** If processing unsolicited emails from outside the State network isn't necessary for your work, open attachments only when you are certain the communication comes from a highly trusted source. If you must open emails from unknown or unfamiliar sources to perform a task, discuss with your supervisor the best procedures for handling such attachments.

E. Steven Emanuel  
Chief Information Officer, State of NJ  
Office of Information Technology

“Together, we can do great things.”