



# DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

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August 1, 2013



Members of the Korean War Veterans Association chapter 148 placed a flower wreath at the base of the New Jersey Korean War Memorial in Atlantic City July 26, 2013, during the commemoration ceremony for the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice. More photos of the ceremony can be viewed by visiting our [Facebook](#) or [Flickr](#) page. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

## New Jersey's Dragon Soldiers

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, NJ DMAVA public affairs

Their jobs are not the most glamorous in the military but very critical for survival. They have to perform their duties in any type of weather element, and if in a serious situation, most likely they will be suited up in a uniform that can be very uncomfortable in the hot weather.

"It takes a special kind of person to be a Dragon Soldier," said Capt. Leo Magee, company commander 50th Chemical Company. "These Soldiers love this stuff and they have to in order to perform their duties."

What Magee refers to is the job duties of a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) operations specialist. The Dragon Soldiers are primarily responsible for defending the country against the threat of CBRN weapons and weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

They accomplish this task by planning, employing and coordinating CBRN defense systems in support of joint and combined arms operations, which include CBRN reconnaissance, biological agent detection, obscurant systems, decontamination, and other CBRN hazard detection and warning.

But what makes this job a little more difficult is the possibility of having to don into MOPP level 4. MOPP, which stands for mission oriented protective posture, are broken into five levels, with level zero being the most passive in which the Soldier only carries their protective gear. At level 4, the Soldier has don his full



*Pfc. Maria Vasquez, a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear operations specialist with the 50th Chemical Company washes off potential chemicals from a HUMVEE as part of the decontamination process during the CBRN defense exercise held at the Somerset Armory.*



*Spc. John Barandica, a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear operations specialist, power washes a HUMVEE as part of the decontamination process during a CBRN defense exercise July 23, 2013. Soldiers from the 50th Chemical Company, New Jersey National Guard, conducted annual training at the Somerset Armory July 15-29.*

**“These Soldiers love this stuff and they have to in order to perform their duties.”**  
*Capt. Leo Magee*

protective gear, which include over garment, mask and hood, field gear, footwear covers and gloves. And at this level the Soldier is in a very uncomfortable position, not only because of the heat and obstructed view from the mask, but because at this level, most likely they are in the presence of some CBRN agent.

"We are the first to go in to a possible chemical environment," said Sgt. Curtis Baptiste, a CBRN specialist with the 50th Chemical Co. "Our job is to detect any type of chemical. We search and survey the area and then report to higher command our findings."

Utilizing hand-held detection kits or biological integrated detection system (BIDS) vehicles, the Soldiers from the 50th Company perform their jobs that keep other Soldiers safe in the battlefield, said Staff Sgt. Peter Taburas, also a CBRN specialist with the 50th Chemical Co., and a BIDS operator.

Consequently, Taburas, Baptiste and more than 60 Soldiers from the Somerset Armory based unit were practicing their skills July 23 at the Armory. In hot weather, they simulated the detection and decontamination of troops and vehicles as part of their annual training, which ran from July 15-29. Although the scenario was simulated, the process was real as the Soldiers with their gas mask on, sprayed, scrubbed and washed the vehicles to ensure that any chemical agent was removed and the equipment and Soldiers were ready to get back to their mission.

"This is some excellent training," said 1st Lt. Elizabeth Donofrio, executive officer of the 50th Chemical Co. "In our traditional

Guard schedule; it is very difficult to train on all the tasks, so we train harder during our annual training."

They know their jobs is very important if a disaster or an attack with WMDs happens in New Jersey, as they would be most likely called up to assist local civil authorities and first responders, as well as the 21st Civil Support Team. The 21st CST's mission is to assess a suspected WMD attack, advise civilian responders on appropriate actions, and facilitate the arrival of additional state and federal military forces.

So critical is the job of these CBRN specialists that Lt. Col. Timothy Metcalf, the 21st CST commander, paid a visit to the Somerset Armory to assess the training of these Dragon Soldiers.

As the only chemical company in the New Jersey National Guard, training to stay mission ready is taken very serious by these Soldiers, said Magee.

"We want to put the Company on the map," said Magee.



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**BE A HERO HIRE A HERO VETERANS CAREER EXPO**

Military who have served, are serving and their family members, are invited to attend this event to learn about employment opportunities.

**DATE:** Monday, August 19  
**LOCATION:** United Fairway Club (18 Fairway)  
at Liberty National (Follow signs to Lot 3)  
100 Caven Point Rd, Jersey City, NJ 07305

**TIME:** 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.



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**2013 Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair – Trenton, NJ**  
Lawrenceville Armory  
151 Eggert Crossing Road  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648  
September 12, 2013

**HIRING FAIR: 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

**EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP: 9:00 A.M.**

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

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WALK-INS WELCOME

A workshop for veterans and other military job seekers that focuses on resume writing, tips for successfully navigating hiring fairs, military skill translation, and interviewing will start at 9:00 a.m. To register for the GE Hiring Our Heroes Employment Workshop, visit [hohworks.eventbrite.com/](http://hohworks.eventbrite.com/)

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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Col. Lisa J. Hou, center, is pinned her colonel rank by her parents during a promotion ceremony at New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Lawrenceville office July 30, 2013. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

**HIGHLIGHTS**New Jersey Department of ... **Events** ▾**+ Create Event** \* ▾**Upcoming Events** · Past Events**NJ DMAVA Outreach Event at NJ State Fair**  
Friday at 9:00amThe Sussex County Fairgrounds  
**Augusta, New Jersey**

Join · Share

**Senior Benefit Forum**  
Monday, August 5, 2013 at 2:00pmSpring Valley at Galloway, 46 West Jimmy Leeds  
Road, Galloway, NJ 08205

Join · Share

**Veterans Career Expo**  
Monday, August 19, 2013 at 10:00amUnited Fairway Club at Liberty National, 100 Caven  
Point Rd., Jersey City, NJ 07305

Join · Share

**Veterans Job Fair at Brookdale Community College**  
Monday, August 26, 2013 at 10:00am  
2 guestsBrookdale Community College  
**Lincroft, New Jersey**

Join · Share

**New Jersey World War II Memorial**  
Saturday, September 7, 2013 at 11:00am  
1 guestNew Jersey WWII Memorial, 125 West State  
Street, Trenton, NJ 08625

Join · Share

E-mail your Photo of the Week or  
Highlights submissions to:[wayne.woolley@njdmava.state.nj.us](mailto:wayne.woolley@njdmava.state.nj.us) **OR**  
[armando.vasquez@njdmava.state.nj.us](mailto:armando.vasquez@njdmava.state.nj.us)

**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](mailto:pao@njdmava.state.nj.us).

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