

DMAVA Highlights

Oct. 15, 2009 Volume 10 Number 37



Master Sgt. Anthony J. Henchinski, center, and Senior Airman Natasha Thompson, right, along with 177th Fighter Wing Airmen applaud after hearing the results of the Operational Readiness Inspection.

Fighter wing clears major hurdle

Photo and story by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA

More than a year's worth of hard work was summarized by a single word: "Excellent."

This word and grade ensures the 177th Fighter Wing's future and means it is fully capable of performing its wartime mission – keeping jets flying and taking the fight to the enemy.

The 177th went through its first Operational Readiness Inspection in 13 years by the Air Combat Command Office of the Inspector General from Oct. 2-8.

The IG rates wings on three areas: Employment, which is about mission effectiveness – keeping the aircraft flying and putting bombs on target; Mission Support, which covers everything from logistics to engineering, command and control to medical, and finally the Ability To Survive and Operate – how wing personnel react to an attack, and more important how quickly they recover in order to get back to the primary mission of refueling, loading weapons and launching aircraft to continue the fight.

These areas are then broken into sub groups; failure in any one can be catastrophic to the entire wing.

The IG grades all these areas and sub groups either Outstanding, Excellent, Satisfactory, Marginal or Unsatisfactory.

In preparation, the Jersey Airmen travelled nationwide to observe how other Guard wings were training; then watched them perform during their ORIs.

The stakes are high: units that fail risk losing their missions; loss of mission could equal unit closure.

Unfortunately many units failed – the inspection is that tough.

The 177th pooled the lessons learned from those visits and nearly every month for the last six months have been running operational readiness exercises, which replicate the inspection's mission requirements and stress.

It paid off.

The IG recognized 33 Airmen and 12 teams, which are representative of the entire range of Wing functions for their performance during the inspection.

National Guard Aviation Troops Posting Strong Finish in Iraq

By Sgt. Wayne Woolley, DMAVA Public Affairs Office

After a long hot summer in Iraq, the Soldiers of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion and 628th General Support Aviation Detachment have kept up their morale and are making preparations to return to New Jersey in January, according to Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the Adjutant General.

Rieth and state Command Sgt. Major Jerome Jenkins traveled to Iraq last week to meet with the unit's roughly 300 unit Soldiers. It was the general's fifth trip to Iraq and he found the spirits of the troops to be as high as any he's met in theater.

"It was all good," Rieth said. "Their accomplishing their mission, morale was high and the esprit de corps was there. I was very impressed by their 'Hoo-Ah' spirit."

During the trip, Rieth promoted John Scannell, the battalion commander, to colonel.

It's anticipated that the unit will remain in theater for another three months. Plans are already underway for the unit to undergo the same thorough 90-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration upon returning to New Jersey that the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is finishing this month.

The aviation troops are flying missions across southern Iraq and their maintenance crews are working overtime to keep the aging UH-60 Blackhawk fleet airborne.

Rieth said he warned the Soldiers to remain focused on their mission, especially as they spend a Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year away from their families.



Col. John Scannell, the commander of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, right, is promoted by Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth at a ceremony last week at Forward Operating Base Delta in Iraq.

"Must swear off from swearing. Bad habit."

--Rutherford B. Hayes 19th president of United States

DMAVA Highlights

Ready for a new adventure? 'Troops to teachers' now hiring

By Staff Sgt. Brian Carson, 108th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Have you ever thought about becoming a teacher? If you have, then the Troops to Teachers program may be just what you're looking for. If you are a veteran, retiree, transitioning out of the service, or a reservist, you might be eligible to take part in this nationwide federal program.

"The primary objective of TTT is to help recruit quality teachers for schools that serve low-income families throughout America," said Melissa Fantozzi, the New Jersey and Delaware Troops to Teachers Program coordinator. "TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math and science, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching."



One of the advantages of using the program are the various stipends that are available to individuals provided that they meet certain requirements.

"One of the main benefits of the program is the financial assistance that may be provided to eligible individuals of up to \$5,000 to help pay for teacher preparation costs or \$10,000 to teach in a high-needs school," said Fantozzi. "The caveat, though, is that individuals receiving this financial assistance must agree to teach for three years."

The purpose of the TTT program is to assist eligible military personnel with the transition to a new career as public school teachers. The TTT program is federally funded, is available in most states, and provides a multitude of services to those who qualify. The TTT program coordinator provides counseling and advisement regarding the TTT program, state certification and job assistance.

Becoming a teacher can be a very rewarding experience and an excellent way to begin a second career. If you are interested in learning more about the Troops to Teachers program, the website is <http://www.nj.gov/education/tttnj/>, where additional information regarding eligibility, benefits, program requirements, and contact information is available.

DMAVA Green

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

You are in the line at the grocery store, the clerk asks, "Paper or plastic?" What is the best answer? Some people will bring their own, some think paper and others stick with plastic – each has its good and bad.

Paper bags are easier to recycle but...plastic bags use 40-70 percent less energy to manufacture than paper; to deliver the same number of bags it takes one truck for plastic and seven for paper; producing plastic bags uses less than four percent of the water needed to make paper bags; and, each year we use about 10 billion paper bags – that's 14 million trees that were cut down to make them.

Plastic bags weigh only four-five grams and can hold up to 17 pounds; nearly 2,000 times their own weight – heck they're stronger than Jack LaLanne! And, people often reuse them for trash and garbage disposal, pet pick-up, lunch bags, storage bags, and much more. The bags are recyclable but most curbside boxes don't accept them. More and more stores do have containers for customers to return bags for recycling.

If you chose to bring your own bag, you need to know that not all reusable bags are created equal. If the bag falls apart quickly, it will end up in the landfill – not what you want. Here are three suggested materials for your next reusable bag.

Recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate (PETE or plastic #1) – This material is made from recycled plastic bottles and bags made from this are usually durable and will last.

Cotton – While many bags are made from cotton, it is better to find organic cotton or even better to get recycled cotton.

Hemp – This is often referred to as a "super fiber." Hemp products will outlast their competition by many years.

Information for this article was taken from Earth911.com
Keep green!

Quotes

I didn't fail the test, I just found 100 ways to do it wrong.

--Benjamin Franklin

If A equals success, then the formula is: A=X+Y+Z, where X is work, Y is play, and Z is keep your mouth shut.

--Albert Einstein

Once in seven years I burn all my sermons; for it is a shame if I cannot write better sermons now than I did seven years ago.

--John Wesley

There is a devil in every berry of the grape.

--The Koran

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New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

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

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Maj. Yvonne Mays – Public Affairs Officer

Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison – Public Affairs Specialist

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

Families

Walk for the Wounded scheduled for Oct. 17 at Ocean City, NJ

On Oct. 17, Operation First Response, a nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance to wounded soldiers and their families, will host Walk for the Wounded on the Ocean City Boardwalk. Registration for the walk takes place at the Ocean City Music Pier at noon, and the three-mile walk begins at 1:30 p.m.

“For the past two years, Operation First Response has hosted Walk for the Wounded in Pennsylvania, drawing attention to the plight of more than 35,000 returning soldiers and their families, while raising funds to help meet the critical needs of these families,” said Steven Brady, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ocean City Home Bank. “After hearing just a few of the stories of the heroes whose lives have been impacted forever by war, I pledged Ocean City Home Bank’s help to bring Walk for the Wounded to the Jersey Shore.”

There is no fee to participate in Walk for the Wounded. Walkers are encouraged to solicit donations for Operation First Response, and a pledge of \$20 entitles the walker to receive a commemorative Walk for the Wounded T-shirt. Walkers may register as individuals or form walking teams with friends, family members or coworkers.

All proceeds from Walk for the Wounded will benefit Operation First Response, a national 501 C(3) nonprofit organization. Of every dollar raised for Operation First Response, 90 cents is donated to wounded soldiers and their families in times of crisis.

To learn more about Walk for the Wounded sponsorships or to register to walk in the event, please contact Tricia Ciliberto, Vice President of Marketing for Ocean City Home Bank, at 1-800-771-7990, extension 1106, or visit www.ochome.com.

Next Marriage Enrichment weekend coming in February

From Marie Durling, Family Programs Specialist

The next Marriage Enrichment weekend will be in February 2010. As soon as information is available on location and date, the applications will be available in the Family Support newsletter. There is only space for 25 couples, so keep your eyes open for the notice. Contact Marie at 609-530-6884 or marie.durling@us.army.mil to receive the e-newsletter.

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

Military-friendly college fair in Woodbridge Oct. 21

The organizers of a college fair at Woodbridge High School 25 Kelly Street, Woodbridge, on Oct. 21 are inviting all members of the military and their families to attend. More than 75 higher learning institutions will be represented at the fair, which opens to the military at noon. Woodbridge Mayor John E. McCormac has also invited several local corporations to send recruiting representatives.



First Tee program comes to Picatinny Arsenal

From Scott Nordland, Picatinny Arsenal

It is with great pleasure to announce a new FREE program that the Picatinny Arsenal SKIESUnlimited Program will be offering! The First Tee program serves young people by offering them a unique perspective toward learning golf while appreciating the positive personal and social values associated with a lifelong game and physical fitness activity. Life skills programs that incorporate The First Tee Nine Core Values are delivered through a network of community-based chapters and elementary schools. Children ages 7-18 are able to participate in this free program that is being offered by the SKIESUnlimited Program beginning in October. Please visit the Children and Youth School Services Web page <http://www.pica.army.mil/mwr/cys/SKIES/SKIES%20Webpage.htm> for more details!

To register contact Scott Nordland, 973-724-7183 or e-mail scott.nordland@us.army.mil.

Free tutoring, homework assistance to Army families

Tutor.com is available to ALL Army-affiliated families – military, civilian and contractor – regardless of deployment status or component. The Web site is 24/7 real-time, individualized, one-to-one tutoring and homework assistance with a qualified and screened tutor.

Spanish speaking tutors are available from 2 p.m.-1 a.m.

Adult assistance college coursework and resume/job search/citizenship/standardized testing is also available.

If you have questions, contact Nadine Moore at the National Guard Bureau, 703-607-9817 or visit www.myarmyonesource.com/cyss_tutor.

State Employees

Employees charitable campaign begins

By Paul Serdiuk, DMAVA Campaign Chairperson

The New Jersey State Employees Charitable Campaign (ECC) has officially kicked off its 2009/2010 Campaign which will run through December 2009. Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth's letter expressed his commitment to this very worthwhile activity.

The ECC provides each of us with an annual opportunity to voluntarily help others and ourselves by donating to any of the 1,500 participating agencies and organizations listed in the ECC Code Book. Contributions may be made by payroll deductions each year or by cash, or check.

Over the years, our Department has been most successful in this endeavor because of your personal generosity and concern. **We urge every employee to support this worthy cause.**

To reduce the cost of printing extra code books we have been asked to share books. If you did not receive one, go to www.njsecc.org. This year the organizations are listed alphabetically by county.

Please remember, your contribution today means a lot to the people in need tomorrow.

Thank you. For more information, contact Paul Serdiuk at 609-530-6878.

New retirement applications, procedures

The Division of Pensions and Benefits is implementing significant changes to retirement application procedures for members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF), Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS), and State Police Retirement System (SPRS).

There will be a new section listing "Terms and Conditions of Retirement" that employees will now need to review and sign off on, in order for their application to be accepted. If a member is applying through MBOS, there will be a check box the employee must check off, stating they have read, understood and agree to the terms and conditions.

Also, for retirements other than Deferred Retirement* the Division of Pensions and Benefits will no longer accept an application more than one year prior to the retirement date. For more information on these changes, a copy of the certified letter from Pensions and Benefits is available as a file attachment with an announcement on the DMAVA.net site under Human Resources. If you wish to obtain a copy of the *New Application for Retirement Allowance* form, please visit the DMAVA.net site under *Human Resources > Benefit Forms, and Helpful Forms*, as well as on the Pensions and Benefits website.

"Save for Retirement Week" designated for October 18-24

Congress has again passed a resolution to designate national "Save for Retirement Week" October 18-24. In New Jersey, the Division of Pensions and Benefits supports this effort to encourage Americans to save more for retirement. This year, we're using this opportunity to remind employees to save the environment as they save for retirement.

The New Jersey State Employees Deferred Compensation Plan (NJSEDCP) is a great way for employees to save for retirement. It also gives them opportunities to save the environment, through actions such as opting for online account statements.

Employees can also get "Save the environment, Save for your retirement" reusable bags from NJSEDCP Education Consultants during National Save for Retirement Week.

Open enrollment for state health plan 2010 begins Oct. 1

It's that time of year again! The State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) Open Enrollment period for all State employees will begin on Oct. 1 and end on Oct. 30, 2009. All changes to coverage made during this open enrollment will be effective on January 2, 2010, for State employees paid through the State Centralized Payroll Unit.

There are new documentation requirements if a member is enrolling a dependent for coverage (spouse, partner, or child). Along with the employer-certified *Health Benefit Applications* and/or *Dental Plan Application* the following documents are required to verify the dependent's relationship to the member and eligibility for coverage.

- Employees who are enrolling a spouse as a dependent in the SHBP for the first time are required to provide a photocopy of the marriage certificate and a copy of the top half of the front page of the employee's most recently filed federal tax return (Form 1040*) that lists the spouse.

- Employees who are enrolling a child as a dependent in the SHBP for the first time are required to provide a photocopy of the child's birth certificate showing the employee's name as a parent.

If the employee's name is not on the birth certificate, the birth certificate and a copy of the top half of the front page of the employee's most recently filed federal tax return (Form 1040*) that lists the child may be submitted.

**Employees may black out all financial information shown on the form but the last 4 digits of any Social Security numbers.*

Note: Additional documentation requirement information can be found on the SHBP Web site at: www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/shbp.htm. If you wish to enroll any dependents in the SHBP, and are not sure what documentation is required, please contact Benefits Administrator, Lisa J. Dandrea in Human Resources at 609-530-6888.

The State Health Benefits Commission has approved health, dental, and prescription drug plan rates for the 2010 plan year. The cost for health and prescription remains the same at 1.5 percent of the employee's salary. There will be a slight increase to the dental plan rates for state employees. Rate increases will be effective Jan. 2, 2010. These rates may be found on the SHBP Web site at: http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/hb_open_enrollment_2009/dental-state-biweekly.pdf.

Veterans & Military

Falca-Dodson to be honored in AC

The New Jersey League of Municipalities Women in Municipal Government Committee will be honoring New Jersey Air National Guard Commander Major Gen. I Maria Falca-Dodson during the Leagues 94th Annual conference in Atlantic City. Falca-Dodson will receive the "Outstanding Women in Government Award". She is also the key note speaker. The event is being held at the Sheraton Atlantic City Pearl Ballroom on Thursday Nov. 19, at 8 a.m.

The cost is \$45.00 per person. Breakfast is included.

Contact Maj. Yvonne Mays, 609-530-6939, if you would like to attend.

Enlisted Association recognizes top performers

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of New Jersey is pleased to announce that the following Soldiers and Airmen have been recognized for their service in 2009:

Outstanding First Sergeant (Army)

- Command Sgt. Maj. Wilfred Z. Lea
- 1st Sgt. Mark R. Rizzo

Outstanding First Sergeant (Air)

- Chief Master Sgt. Edward W. Wolbert, Outstanding First Sergeant Award (Air)
- Master Sgt. June I. Kelly

Outstanding NCO (Army)

- Sgt. Maj. Harry Arbeitman,
- Sgt. Monica G. Montgomery

Outstanding NCO (Air)

- Chief Master Sgt. Richard W. Spencer
- Master Sgt. Malakatu Saleem-Maing

Outstanding Soldier Award

- Sgt. 1st Class Robert G. Vuinovich Jr.
- Pfc. Randy Pearce

Outstanding Airman Award

- MSgt. John E. Bodine, Outstanding Airman Award (Air)
- Senior Airman Darnell A. Holmes

Come join the Army Warrant Officer Association

The United States Army Warrant Officer Association, Fort Dix Doughboy Chapter, is looking for members. For membership information, contact Chief Warrant Officer Nancy E. Rowbotham at nancy.rowbotham@us.army.mil.

Pictures for your "wall"

If your armory needs photos for the Chain of Command "wall," contact Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison at barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us or call 609-530-7088. Tell us which photos you need and we will mail them to you or get them ready for pick-up.

Cavalry Association, AUSA to host talk by World War II historian

The 117th Cavalry Association and the Northern New Jersey Chapter of the Association of the United States Army will gather on Nov. 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room of the Westfield National Guard Armory, 500 Rahway Avenue.

Military historian Harry Yeide, author of six books on World War II armor units and battles, will be the guest speaker. His latest effort, "Steeds of Steel" is the story of mechanized cavalry during World War II. Units with New Jersey lineage including the 117th Cavalry and the 102nd Cavalry Group played a key role in some of the featured battles.

There is no cost, although donations to the associations will be accepted. Mess dress, Dress Blues or civilian attire is appropriate. RSVP to retired Col. Richard F. Plechner at 732-549-1535.

Soldier Show Coming to Fort Hamilton

If you missed the U.S. Army Soldier Show at Fort Dix, you've got another chance to catch the production at the Fort Hamilton Theater in Brooklyn, N.Y. on Friday Oct 16th at 8:00 p.m. and again on Saturday, Oct 17th at 3:00 p.m.

Admission is free.

As an added bonus, one of the New Jersey National Guard's own is taking part in the production, Sgt. Jarred Morgan, who is working on the sound production.

North Jersey Stand Down will be held on Oct. 17

The Northern New Jersey Stand Down, a one day outreach to assist homeless veterans and their dependents, will be held on Saturday, October 17, 8:30a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the John F. Kennedy Pool and Recreation Center, 211 West Kinney Street, Newark.

Services offered will include: employment services, veterans benefits information, medical benefits information, social services, employment services, substance abuse programs, recovery programs, PTSD counseling, legal services, photo ID, clothing, vocational rehabilitation services and refreshments.

Veterans Organizations contact information

State Veterans Service Council

Richard Clark, RJClark21@msn.com

BG William C. Doyle Cemetery Advisory Council

William Rakestraw, warjrnj@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

When – Oct 17, 6 p.m..

What – Col . Ronald Cefalone retirement dinner

Where – NJARNG Armory, Lawrenceville,

More info – Call Lucy Brogle, 609-562-0264, lucy.brogle@us.army.mil

Picatinny Haunted House is set to scare one and all

Bring the family to Picatinny Arsenal's "Fear of the Unknown" haunted house on Oct. 23, 24 and 30, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Ticket cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children ages 6-12.

Children 6-12 must be accompanied by an adult; not recommended for children under 6 years old.

Proceeds benefit the Picatinny Youth Program, Military Unit Fund and Civil Air Patrol. There will be graveside dining at the Cemetery Café with hamburgers, hot dogs and chili. Seating is available.

Entrance to the Picatinny Haunted House will be through the Navy Hill gate off Lake Denmark Road in Rockaway Township. Detailed directions can be found at <http://www.pica.army.mil/mwr/cys/cyshomepage.htm>. The entrance gate to Picatinny will be closed to incoming cars at 9 p.m. No backpacks, large purses or cameras.

108th Airman singing for AMC Icon show at Scott AFB

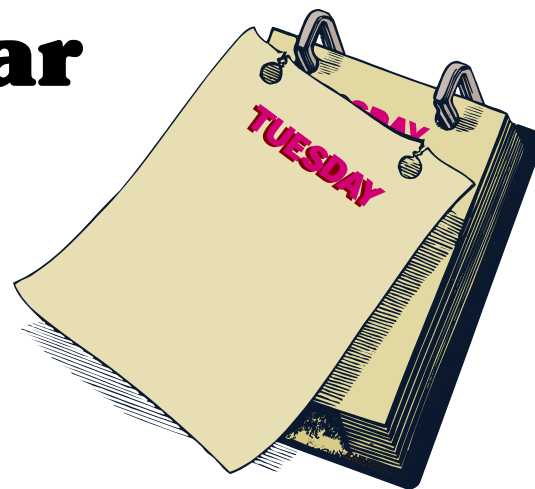
Master Sgt. Lisel White of the 108th Air Refueling Wing will be traveling to Scott Air Force Base, Ill., later this month to take part in the AMC Icon Show.

Several months ago she competed in the local AMC Icon Show at McGuire Air Force Base and was named top Airman in the competition. She will be competing against 12 other Airmen from the Air Mobility Command at Scott.

The AMC Icon is loosely based on American Idol and designed to showcase the vocal talents of the AMCE communities. Each of the installations held contests during the July/August timeframe and were open to authorized participants 18 years old and above. Everyone – spouses, kids and Airmen themselves – were eligible to win the base-level contests, but only the AMCE Air Force members were permitted to represent their base in the competition.

Participants are competing for \$2,000 in cash prizes and the winner receives a special invitation to audition with the Air Force Tops in Blue – the Air Force's premier entertainment showcase, according to Scott Black of the AMC Icon Program Marketing.

White has had lots of practice singing the national anthem at the many 108th functions and sings regularly at her church and other events. We wish her luck at the AMC Icon Show.



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.

Oct. 20, 21, 22** Jersey Gardens Mall

Nov. 9*, 10 Woodbridge Center Mall

January 5*, 6, 7 Cherry Hill Mall

February 2*, 3, 4 Monmouth Mall

*Medal ceremony at 10:30 a.m.

**Medal ceremony at 1 p.m.

Comedy show with a twist coming to Fort Monmouth

Coming to the Expo Theater at Fort Monmouth on Oct. 16 at 3 p.m., is comedian Bernie McGrenahan as part of his Happy Hour comedy tour. He will be performing his live stand-up comedy show with a twist – a powerful and inspirational message.

The performance is free and there will be preferred seating for military families. The show is presented by Army Community Services. For questions, call 732-532-2077 or e-mail Monm-USA-GACS@conus.army.mil.

To see more about McGrenahan, visit www.HappyHourComedy.com.

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.