



DMAVA Highlights

December 18, 2008

Volume 8, Number 51

*NJ Dept of Military
and Veterans
Affairs*

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

*Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-
Dodson
Deputy Adjutant General*

*Col. (Ret) Stephen G. Abel
Deputy Commissioner for
Veterans Affairs*

**Contacting us
is easy!**

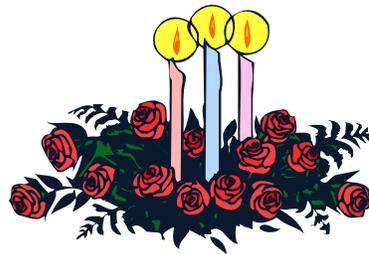
*Public Affairs
Office*

*Tech. Sgt. Barbara
Harbison
Barbara.harbison@njd
mava.state.nj.us*

Or

609-530-6951

Have a Happy Holiday. DMAVA Highlights is taking a break and will return on Jan. 8, 2009.



News For Your Views

New Jersey Guard chaplains on call to help families

By Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA Public Affairs Specialist

The holidays can be a difficult time for families, especially this year, with the deployment of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

But there's help available.

Army National Guard chaplains, Lt. Col. Joanne Martindale and 1st Lt. Andre Ascalon, are on active duty here in New Jersey for the length of the deployment and available to assist families with their spiritual needs. They're joined by Sgt. 1st Class Jeretha Prather, a veteran chaplains' assistant.

"We're available 24-7," Prather said.

And a phone call away.

Call 609-694-0635 or 609-802-8125.

New Jersey pioneers effort to help Guard members in legal trouble

By Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA Public Affairs specialist

New Jersey is embarking on a pioneering effort to help veterans who get in trouble with the law.

And the Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard will be at the forefront of the effort that launched earlier this month with a partnership between the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Judiciary.

The Veterans Assistance Project will attempt to identify every former and current member of the armed forces who enters the criminal justice system.

In many cases, particularly those involving less serious offenses, the veteran will be assigned a mentor from the Army Guard or Air Guard. The mentors will work with the veteran to ensure they are able to get access to mental health providers, drug and alcohol counselors and benefits specialists.

We're on the Web!
www.nj.gov/military



Veterans' Organizations

Contact Information

State Veterans Service
Council

Mr. Richard Clark
RJClark21@msn.com

BG William C. Doyle
Cemetery Advisory
Council

Mr. William Rakestraw
warjrnj@msn.com

Veterans Hotlines



Benefits & Entitlements

1-888-8NJ-VETS
(1-888-865-8387)

Mental Health
1-866-VETS-NJ4
(1-866-838-7654)

The program will be open as well to any National Guard Soldiers or Airmen who have not been arrested, but are at risk of running into legal trouble. Mentors to National Guard Soldiers and Airmen will be assigned from outside their chain of command.

The program is beginning in Atlantic County and will expand to Union County early next year. The rest of the state's 21 counties are expected to join the program by the end of 2009.

Opportunity available to increase your GT score

From the Recruiting and Retention Command, Fort Dix

A course is available for Soldiers who need to increase their General Technical (GT) score on the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT). It will cover an overview of paragraph comprehension, mathematics and test taking procedures. There will also be a practice exam given to determine the level of instruction required.

The course will be given at the Lawrenceville Armory, 101 Eggert Crossing Road, Lawrenceville, on Jan. 5-9 and 12-16, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The test will be given at 5403 E. First Street, Fort Dix. Soldiers will be paid by their unit through either RMP, SUTA or AT status. Soldiers are encouraged to bring SUTA certificates to be paid by the unit.

Test dates are Jan. 13, 2009 (10 available seats), Jan. 15 (10 available seats) and Jan. 22 (6 available seats). The test takes approximately three hours to complete.

Prerequisites to take the test:

- ❖ All personnel who enroll for the class will take the exam on one of the listed dates.
- ❖ Can test up to three times within a six month period; initial test with two retests without a waiver request.
- ❖ New Soldiers must wait six months from initial entry ASVAB to retest
- ❖ Fourth test must be approved by program manager.

Soldiers who are interested in the program must send name, SSN, unit Readiness NCO information, and class date to lonell.jenkins@us.army.mil. For questions or more information, contact Capt. Lonell Jenkins Jr, 609-562-0711 or Al Colon, 609-562-0719.

VA Urges Vets to Sign-up for Direct Deposits

WASHINGTON (December 15, 2008) -- Every month, 730,000 veterans or survivors look for their compensation, pension checks or educational assistance payments in their mailboxes. Nearly all receive them, but theft and mail delays cause problems for some veterans, which can be prevented by direct deposits.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is urging those veterans and family members now receiving paper checks to join nearly 3.1 million others whose VA payments are safely deposited electronically.

"VA is teaming up with the Treasury Department in a new campaign to protect government beneficiaries against the theft of funds and of their identities," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

"Veterans earned -- and rely on -- the financial support we send them every month. I urge them to help VA ensure they get those funds reliably and safely by signing up for direct deposit."

Peake cited several easy ways to sign up for direct deposit -- calling VA toll-free at (800) 333-1795 or enrolling online at www.GoDirect.org.

Veterans, and family members who receive VA payments, also can sign up by contacting a VA regional benefits office or their financial institution. Information about direct deposits will be included in VA's monthly compensation and pension envelopes throughout 2009.

The VA Secretary urged veterans to remember that direct deposits relieve worry about mail delivery being delayed by severe weather or natural disasters. The deposits also eliminate trips to banks or credit unions to deposit checks, while providing immediate access to money at the same time each month.

**NJ World War II
Memorial**



For information or to
make a donation, call
609-530-7049

Check out the Web site
to RSVP for the
Memorial's dedication on
Nov. 11 -
http://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/wwii_memoorial/contact.html.



**Please submit
any articles
and all
information for
DMAVA
Highlights**

to:

**PAO Office
DMAVA Highlights
ATTN:
Tech. Sgt. Barbara
Harbison**

**DEADLINE IS
NOON
WEDNESDAY**

**Tech. Sgt. Barbara
Harbison
Barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us**

Make DMAVA facilities part of your holiday gifting

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

In this season of giving, we can often forget those less fortunate than us. We here in New Jersey, especially at the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs have four facilities that can use your gifts and assistance.

The three Veterans homes – Paramus, Menlo Park and Vineland – and Veterans Haven, all have wish lists of items their residents can use to maintain their daily living and to give that extra spark during this holiday season.

If you, your family or your organization would like to give a gift to one of the homes, drop an e-mail to me, at Barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us and let me know which facility you would like to help. I will forward the list and a point of contact for that facility.

Pass the joy of the season onto others.

DMAVA Green

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

So you have some old electronic equipment sitting around the house and your significant other has declared it is NOW time to get rid of it. Can you toss it in the trash, recycle it, donate it to a worthy cause or maybe make some money from it? Maybe some or all of the above.

Most electronic equipment should not be tossed in the trash because it has chemicals like mercury lurking inside. That isn't good for the environment. Recycling is a good option, but even that has its pitfalls.

Some recyclers do not operate under the strict guidelines, controls and regulations set up by the government and the recycling industry. Many local communities have electronic recycling days; check your town or county web site for the schedule.

Some items, most notably cell phones, can be donated to various charitable organizations. Here are a few to check out.

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence – http://www.ncadv.org/takeaction/DonateaPhone_129.html

Phones for Life – cell phones for seniors, victims of domestic violence and adults with serious disabilities - <http://www.phones4life.org/donate.php>

Call to Protect – cell phones for domestic violence victims – <http://www.donateaphone.com/CalltoProtect/donate.cfm>

Some retailers, like Dell, offer programs to help customers recycle and donate their old computers. Visit www.dell.com, click on "All About Dell," then "Values," then "Global Recycling," for more information.

Radio Shack recently instituted a program that will allow customers to send their old MP3 players, GPS, laptops, and more to the company and get a gift certificate in return. For more information, visit <http://radioshack.cexchange.com/online/home/index.rails>.

For those of you who have holiday lights that are no longer glowing, winking and blinking, a Michigan company will recycle them and give you a 15 percent off coupon for their LED lights.

Send your old incandescent holiday lights to HolidayLEDs.com and they will recycle them. As noted in last week's column, LED lights use much less electricity and last longer.

Mail your old lights to HolidayLEDs.com, Attn: Recycling Program, 120 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 1403, Jackson MI 49201.

If you have a green tip or a site to recommend, drop me a line at Barbara.harbison@njdmava.state.nj.us.

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

Phone
numbers and
Web sites to
remember

Directory
Assistance:

1-602-293-4907

Verizon Super Pages:
<http://www.superpages.com/>

AT&T:
<http://www.anywho.com/>

SBC Yellow Pages:
<http://www.yellowpages.com/>

Telephone and
contact information
on state employees
can be found at
<http://njdirect.state.nj.us/>

DMAVA
Emergency
Hotline:

1-866-232-5798

Calendar

Concert in Sea Girt benefits Food Bank of Ocean, Monmouth counties

From the desk of Master Sgt. Karin M. Dates, NJNG Counter Drug Task Force

Project PACKMAN (Police and Community Kids Music Against Narcotics) is a music group run by DARE Officer Rob Melendez. The group is holding a food and fund drive on **Dec. 19**, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Sea Girt Elementary School to benefit The Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean counties. Along with the food drive and music, there will be a guest appearance by Santa Claus.

The most needed items are ready-to-eat canned meals, canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, hot and cold cereals and more – for an expanded list of the items needed, visit http://www.foodbankmoc.org/Running_a_Food_Drivei.htm.

Project PACKMAN is a cover band; all local Monmouth County kids. They have played at the DARE Conference in Atlantic City every year and lots of other venues. They rock. It will be a fun event.

Schools, Training

254th Regiment provides class schedule for 2009 training year

The following courses will be conducted by the 254th Regiment, New Jersey Army National Guard, at Sea Girt and Fort Dix during training year 2009.

INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING COURSES (IDT):

- ❖ The Army Basic Instructor Training Course: April 4-June 13, 2009
- ❖ Small Group Instructor Course: Jan. 10-March 7, 2009 (1st); July 11-Sept. 19, 2009 (2nd)
- ❖ Pre WARRIOR Leadership Courses (3 Classes, 3 weekends per class):
 - ❖ Jan. 10-Mar 8, 2009; April 4-June 14, 2009; , and July 11-Sept. 20, 2009
- ❖ Officer Candidate School: Phase 2 Class 52 Aug. 9, 2008-June 14, 2009
- ❖ Officer Candidate School: Phase 0 Class 53 begins March 7, 2009; Phase 2 is Aug. 1, 2009-June 14, 2010.

ACTIVE DUTY TRAINING COURSES

*NOTE: There will be no Inactive Duty Training (IDT) BNCOC this year.

- ❖ 91W10 Medic Sustainment: Feb. 9-18, 2009
- ❖ 13F10 MOS-T Fire Support Specialist: March 14-21, 2009
- ❖ Company Level Command Team Course (for new Commanders and their 1SGs): April 18-19, 2009
 - ❖ 11B10 MOS-T Infantryman: May 9-23, 2009
 - ❖ 11B2/3/4 (T) Infantryman Transition: May 9-23, 2009
 - ❖ 11B30 Basic NCO Course Phase II: June 6-20, 2009
 - ❖ 31B10 MOS-T Military Police: Feb. 22-March 6, 2009

Combat Lifesaver Course: Send unit request to Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Cosmanic at Stephen.r.cosmanic@us.army.mil.

Questions should be addressed to 1st Sgt. Gary Davidson, 732-974-6312. ATRRS School Code: 1004.

Retirements, Reunions

Gala reunion planned for former, current 170th/108th personnel

Come one, come all – active or retired – for a fun-filled weekend with trips down memory lane. A Gala Reunion is being planned for all of the faces of the 170th and 108th Air Refueling Wing on **April 25, 2009**.

The elegant semi-formal will be held at the Doubletree Hotel and Executive Meeting Center, 200 Atrium Drive, Somerset, NJ, 6-11 p.m.

A deposit of \$50 is required per person as soon as possible. Hotel reservation, rates and activities will be announced at a later date.

ESGR office
JFHQ
3650 Saylor's Pond
Road
Fort Dix, NJ
08641
Hank Pierre, 609-
562-0156,
hank.pierre@njdma
va.state.nj.us
Tammy Cartagena,
609-562-0157,
tammy.l.cartagena
@us.army.mil
Fax
609-562-0158

For more information, contact Gloria A. Smith, 732-752-8263/732-991-9102 or Phyllis Jackson-Rackley, 908-451-7147/908-730-6377.

Say Again?



DMAVA emergency hotline is up and running

Winter is just around the corner and with that comes weather that can make driving to work difficult. There may be times that the department may have a delayed opening or even closures. If there is a question, call the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Emergency Hotline:

1-866-232-5798

You will then hear the following message:

You have reached the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Emergency Information Number. Please list to the following menu choices and select an appropriate option:

- ❖ State employees – press 1
- ❖ Federal employees – press 2
- ❖ National Guard employees – press 3

Select the appropriate selection and you will hear a pre-recorded message providing further instructions or details regarding the emergency and/or inclement weather reporting instructions.

Free CD for downloading as gift to military, veterans

Isaac Hayes, Alan Jackson, Roy Orbison, Daughtry, Good Charlotte, Joe Perry and eight more artists and groups have come together and each donated one song to the CD, "For the Troops II."

John Ondrasik of Five For Fighting, led the project for the second time. The original CD, "For the Troops," was downloaded more than 350,000 times and 200,000 hard copies were distributed to service members and veterans.

The new CD, which can be downloaded for free at www.aafes.com, will continue to be available until mid-March. Those with valid military identification will be eligible to download the CD.

To get a complete list of the artists and songs on the CD, go to www.cdforthetroops.com.

Wanaque FOP sells T-shirts to benefit FRG

From Thomas P. Norton, Detective Captain/OEM Coordinator, Wanaque Police Dept.

Wanaque Police F.O.P. Supports

NEW JERSEY'S HEROES



NEW JERSEY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Let me introduce myself – my son is deployed with the 50th IBCT and I have gotten involved with the Riverdale FRG. As my son was nearing his deployment all the members that I work with at the Wanaque Police Department kept asking what can we do or buy for Kevin (my son) and at that time there wasn't another thing he could take with him.

The Wanaque Police Department F.O.P. came up with the idea to help out Riverdale FRG by selling T-shirts to help the FRG's cause to send packages overseas, help the families as needed and the other programs that they will be running. The following message has gone out to as many people as we could find and we are asking that for your assistance in either purchasing a shirt or helping to send the following message to others.

**The Wanaque Police Department is selling T-Shirts to help support the New Jersey Army National Guard "Family Readiness Group" in their effort to send packages to our soldiers, assist the families and support their causes while their family members are deployed.

QUOTES

If you want to make enemies, try to change something.

- Woodrow Wilson

Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.

- Benjamin Franklin

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.

- Virginia Woolf

Generosity gives assistance, rather than advice.

- Vauvenargues

No man ever became wicked all at once.

- Latin proverb

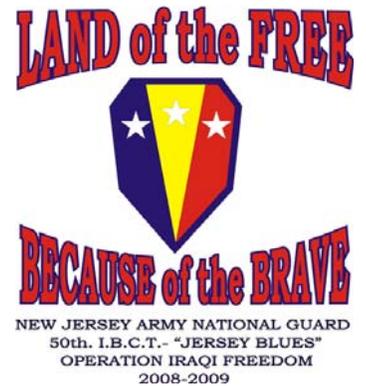
As you are aware, over 3000 members of the NJ Army National Guard were deployed to support "Operation Iraqi Freedom" in August and we would like your support to help them and their families through this trying time.

The T-Shirts are \$20 each with ALL profits going to the FRG.

If you or any member of your organization would like to purchase a shirt you can e-mail me (tnorton@wanaqueborough.com) or call me, Capt. Ken Fackina or Sgt. Charlie Huber (973-835-5600) or they can mail a check to our attention at - Wanaque Police Department 579 Ringwood Avenue, Wanaque NJ 07465. Please indicate the size or sizes needed. If the T-shirt(s) need to be mailed we would ask that the money include \$1.80 per shirt for postage since we don't want to cut into the profits that will be donated to the FRG.

Our goal is to sell 1,000 of these gray colored shirts.

Thanks for helping us help them.



Pass on your BDUs, black boots to Civil Air Patrol cadets

Now that the ABUs and ACUs are filling your closet, what's happening to the BDUs and black boots that you used to wear? Before you start to tear the uniforms up for rags to wash the car, there is a worthy cause that can use them. The New Jersey wing of the Civil Air Patrol is a civilian, non-profit organization and an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. There are more than 1,100 members in the N.J. Wing, about half of them are cadets between the ages 12-21 and will wear the BDUs as part of their training.

The CAP program can give cadets a step up into their adult life – the first female pilot on the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration team, Maj. Nicole Malachowski, and the first female solo pilot in the Thunderbirds, Maj. Samantha Glinski Weeks, both got their start in CAP.

Uniform items can be dropped at the CAP N.J. Wing headquarters on McGuire Air Force Base, building 3412 on Neely Road (around the corner from the McGuire Medical Clinic). Duty hours are Monday and Wednesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday noon to 9 p.m. For more information, call (609) 723-8200 or e-mail hq@njwg.cap.gov.

For more information about the Civil Air Patrol in New Jersey, visit www.njwgcap.org.

Earn up to \$8,500 for officer accessions in G-RAP

From the desk of Warrant Officer Misty L. DiGangi, AMEDD Recruiter

Guard Recruiting Assistants can earn additional income assisting ARNG recruiting efforts by identifying well-qualified men and women for service in the ARNG. RAs may earn up to \$8,500 for each select Officer Candidate who accepts a Commission.

As a G-RAP RA you will cultivate quality Officer Candidates from within your spheres of influence and work with an Officer Strength Manager (OSM) or Warrant Officer Strength Manager (WOSM) to process the Officer Candidate and move them towards accession.

The total amount of payment for an Officer Accession is determined by the ARNG's current critical needs and the GRAP-O payment chart. There are four categories by which RAs will receive payment for Officer Accessions. RAs can earn up to \$2,000 for each new recruit who enlists and reports to Basic Training or for each prior service member.

G-RAP is available to Traditional Guard members and National Guard retirees. For more information, go to <http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/>.

Take car care classes at McGuire

The Auto Skills Center on McGuire Air Force Base is open to those eligible to use the

State Family Programs

101 Eggert
Crossing Road
Lawrenceville

Toll-free number
888-859-0352
Family
Assistance
609-530-6884
Teen Youth
Group
609-530-6836
Fax
609-530-6871

facilities on base. The November Tuesday Special is tire rotation and balance for \$40. Call 609-754-4316 to make an appointment. Car Care Classes are back!! All classes will be held on Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Auto Hobby Shop. Class size will be limited to 10-12. Call 609-754-4316 to register.

McGuire fitness center gives orientation sessions

The McGuire Fitness Center has an equipment orientation and assistance with a workout plan. The equipment orientation will include training on how to properly and safely use all of our cardio, free weight, and selectorized weight equipment. Call 754-6085 to set up an appointment for these services Monday through Friday 8 a.m.- 6 p.m. The equipment orientations will also be available for walk-ins.

MyArmyBenefits Website - the single source for all Army Benefits

MyArmyBenefits at <http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil> is the official Army benefits resource for active-duty, Guard and reserve Soldiers, family members and retirees. Active-duty Soldiers with AKO accounts can access personalized reports on the survivor, disability, and retirement benefits through MyArmyBenefits.

Military Salute Project releases flag manual

The Military Salute Project has released the "United States Flag Manual," a 45-page comprehensive summary of the history of the American Flag and the regulations and guidelines for its display and use.

Three free online viewing or download options are available...

-- Adobe PDF format for printing on one side of a page

-- Microsoft Word format for printing on one side of a page

-- Microsoft Word format for printing as a book on both sides of mirrored pages

For more information, please visit our web page at <http://home.att.net/~militarysalute3/>.

Sign up for G-RAP and make \$\$\$\$

Sign up today and earn up to \$2,000 for each new recruit who enlists into the National Guard and reports to basic training.

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP) is a contracted program designed for individuals who voluntarily apply to become eligible to serve as a part-time Recruiting Assistant (RA).

G-RAP is available to Traditional Guard members and National Guard retirees. This opportunity is open to both Army and Air Guard members. For more information, go to <http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/>.

Honor Guard program wants YOU!

Looking for a way to serve and get some satisfaction at the same time? The Honor Guard program is looking for members of the Army and Air Guard to join the team to perform honor guard duties at the funerals of veterans. There is an initial eight hours of training for all new enrollees, with on-going sustainment training. As an honor guard member, you will receive a day of pay for each day's mission, minimum of \$50, and traditional drilling Guard members receive a retirement point for each day's duties.

If you are interested in applying for the Honor Guard program, call retired Sgt. Maj. Ed Goetschius at 609-530-7090.

Reduced rates on NJ Transit for military, dependents

Here is another benefit offered to military members, retirees and their dependents by the state of New Jersey.

Eligible passengers may ride at reduced fare rates on any NJ Transit bus, rail or light rail service at all times, without restriction, upon presentation of authorized identification.

All military personnel and their dependents will be permitted to purchase transportation at the senior citizen/passengers with disabilities reduced fare rate upon

showing their military or military dependent ID card. The following military personnel are entitled to this fare: Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard or Retired for Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard.

Information for N.J. state employees

Direct Deposit – A safe and reliable way to receive your pay

From the desk of Lisa Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

This is just a reminder that the convenience of direct deposit is offered to all state employees. It is encouraged that our employees consider taking advantage of direct deposit with all that it has to offer.

Enrolling into direct deposit means having your money directly deposited into your checking or savings account. You're going to be on vacation on pay day? Tired of waiting for Postal Service to deliver your money? Eliminate that with direct deposit. It is a convenient and reliable way to receive your pay and know it is safe in your account, when you need it to be. And the service is free!

To get enrolled you must complete the "Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payroll Deposits" form, and turn it in to your Human Resources Payroll Department. A copy of this form is available on DMAVANet under *Human Resources – Helpful Forms*. Just print, fill out and send to Human Resources. Please allow up to three pay periods (six weeks) for your direct deposit to take effect.

To request a form or more information, contact Lisa Dandrea in Human Resources at 609-530-6888.

Pension loan applications to be submitted through MBOS

From the desk of Lisa Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

NOTICE from the Division of Pensions and Benefits:

Effective Nov. 1, 2008, an eligible member who wishes to borrow against their pension account, MUST submit the loan request through the Pension Loan Application accessible through a personal account with the Member Benefits Online System (MBOS). Please note the following changes:

- ❖ The *Loan Application* will no longer be available as a printed form or through the Division's Web site.
- ❖ Paper *Loan Applications* that are received by mail as of Nov. 1, 2008, will be returned to members with instructions on submitting the loan request through MBOS.
- ❖ The loan fax number, which has been phased out of use since the introduction of loans through MBOS, will be completely disabled.
- ❖ Limited access to a computer or a member's reluctance to use MBOS **will not** be considered sufficient circumstances to allow manual loan processing.

Employees who are already registered MBOS users currently have access to the online loan application through their MBOS account.

Employees who are new to MBOS can access MBOS after they register with both the *MyNewJersey* Web site and MBOS. Registration is free; however, the registration process requires several steps and new users should carefully follow the MBOS registration instructions. Visit <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/mbosregister.htm> for a complete list of instructions. If, after following the MBOS Registration Instructions, you still need assistance registering for or using MBOS, please contact the MBOS Help Desk at (609) 777-0534 or send an e-mail with the subject line "MBOS E-mail" to: pensions.nj@treas.state.nj.us

Employees required to register for MBOS

From the desk of Lisa J. Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

MBOS is the Member Benefits Online System. Through MBOS, employees may review their pension contributions, loan status, health benefits information, update their beneficiary information, apply for retirement, as well as many other applications. It

has been encouraged that all employees register for this helpful tool. However Pensions is now working on MBOS being a requirement in order for employees to make certain updates to their personal information.

Effective immediately, in all cases where an employee is eligible to become a member of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the employer will be required to submit all enrollment information to Pensions via online. Important to note is that the online PERS Enrollment Application does not include the Designation of Beneficiary page. Instead, once the member is enrolled and issued a pension number, they must register for a MBOS account at: www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/mbosregister.htm and complete the online Beneficiary Designation form. Until the member completes his or her Designation of Beneficiary, the member's "Estate" will be the beneficiary of record.

Current employees –note, even if you are already enrolled into PERS, if you wish to make any changes to your beneficiary information, you too will need to be registered for MBOS. Members will not be able to submit the Change in Beneficiary Designation paper form since this will no longer be acceptable through the Division of Pensions and Benefits.

Visit the link above for complete instructions to register for MBOS. If you encounter any problems with registration, you may e-mail Pensions and Benefits with your questions/concerns and they can assist you through the process. You may also obtain a tri-fold brochure with MBOS instructions from your Human Resources Office.

No handbooks available for NJDIRECT

Inquiries about NEW handbooks and directories for NJDIRECT has prompted this reply from Pensions and Benefits:

"Unfortunately, we do not have NJ Direct Handbooks to give to members and will not be receiving a supply. Members may visit the NJ Direct website www.horizonblue.com/shbp. Members without computers are encouraged to use their local library or a relative's computer or call the plan directly".

You may also look up benefit information and visit the Unified Provider Directory on the Pensions and Benefits website under State Health Benefits Program.

State employees who move, marry must contact HR department

From the desk of Lisa Dandrea, Human Resources, Personnel Assistant

If you are a state employee, working for DMAVA, Vets Haven, and the Cemetery, and you have an address change and/or a name change, it is *extremely* important that you contact Lisa Dandrea in the Human Resources Office. There have been a lot of issues with tax W2s, pension statements and pay checks being returned to our office, as well as some employees not receiving their new health cards, all due to incorrect addresses. Your address change is not automatic and it is not limited to completing a new W4. There are specific forms for employees to complete that updates their new information statewide. Your change of address or name affects your paycheck, your pension statements, W2s, loans, any information sent out by your health care provider, promotional announcements from Dept. of Personnel, etc. If you have had an address/name change and have not updated your information, please make sure you contact Lisa Dandrea in HRD-ESB at 609-530-6888 or e-mail Lisa.Dandrea@njdmava.state.nj.us.

Discounts offered for State employees

Are you a state employee looking to save a few \$\$\$?

Visit www.state.nj.us/personnel/discounts/index.htm and you can find a number of businesses who offer discounts to New Jersey state employees. From amusement parks to fitness to computer to phones and lots of other discounts between, you will find many ways to save money. For more information, please contact Cindy Leese at cindy.leese@njdmava.state.nj.us or call 609-530-7056.

For the Families

Youth Camp 2009 dates set

From the desk of Amanda Balas, State Youth Coordinator

The dates for 2009 Youth Camp are July 19-25, 2009 at Sea Girt.

Applications will be posted on the website, www.guardfamily.org/Youth, mid-December 2008. Please stay posted for more information.



Click and find out which FAC supports your armory

If you are not sure which Family Assistance Center supports your armory, here is the way to find out. By going to the new and growing New Jersey FAC Web site you will be able to locate the FAC nearest you. It also gives you a place to e-mail your questions and concerns. Just go to <http://www.nj-fac.org>.

Purchase AAFES cards for military, families

By simply logging on to <http://www.aafes.com/> or calling a toll free number, any American can now leverage the exchange benefit on behalf of military families across the globe as the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) is making AAFES gift cards available to the general public. AAFES gift cards can be redeemed at BXs and PXs around the world by active-duty troops and their families as well as military retirees. Shipping costs are mitigated through an AAFES gift card because BX and PX facilities are already stocked with magazines, snacks and electronics troops want as the exchange service's mission is to provide quality merchandise and services at competitively low prices. In addition to BX/PX gift cards, any American can also send a gift certificate that can be redeemed through the exchange's mail order catalogs or website. AAFES gift cards and gift certificates, up to \$500, can be sent by any American who logs on to <http://www.aafes.com/> or calls 877-770-4438. From there, BX/PX gift certificates are sent to individual service members (designated by the purchaser) or distributed to "any service member" through the Air Force Aid Society, American Red Cross, Fisher House Foundation Inc., Navy-Marine Corps Relief, USO or Soldiers Family Assistance Center.

Join the online Guard Family

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

An invitation is extended to join the online Guard Family Portal community! Our goal is to make this website your "one-stop shop" for everything Guard! Here is the link to join:

- ❖ Visit <http://www.guardfamily.org>
- ❖ Click the Join link on the top right
- ❖ Complete the form and click Submit!

The website will provide up-to-date, relevant and state-specific content, including announcements, news, events, discussion forums, documents, surveys and reports.

In addition, you can learn about Family Readiness, Program Services and Plans & Operations, take on-line training, and the site keeps you informed and involved about your benefits as a serving family. FRG Leaders and volunteers are strongly encouraged to enroll on the site and log in your volunteer hours.

Additional dental cleaning allowed during pregnancy by Tricare

The TRICARE Management Activity announced an enhancement to maternity dental benefit through United Concordia. An additional cleaning in a 12-month period will now be allowed at no additional cost for all pregnant TRICARE Dental Program enrollees. The additional cleaning is in response to research indicating there is an increase risk of dental disease during pregnancy. For more information about dental health during pregnancy, go to: http://www.ada.org/public/topics/pregnancy_faqs.asp.

Support for military children of deployed and injured Guard members

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance specialist

Our Military Kids (OMK) provides tangible support to the children of deployed and severely injured National Guard and Military Reserve personnel through grants for enrichment activities and tutoring that nurture and sustain the children during the time a parent is away in service to our country. OMK grants are made to honor the sacrifices military parents make and to ensure that the children have access to activities and support that help the children better cope with challenges arising during a parent's deployment or injury recovery. For additional information go to www.ourmilitarykids.org

No-cost prescription savings plan available

From the desk of Marie Durling, Family Programs Specialist

Here is a no cost to you prescription savings program. This program offers discounts on all prescription medications at your local pharmacy. You do not have to do anything special to qualify. There is no income, residence, employment, age, citizenship or any other qualifications to meet. Not even an application to fill out. The Family State Programs Office at Joint Force Headquarters, Fort Dix has the group ID cards. Call Marie Durling at 609-530-6884 and one will be mailed to you. For more information check out www.mediservrx.com.

Army Information Line: 1-800-833-6622

The Army Information Line (1-800-833-6622) is designed to help all Soldiers and their Family members whether they are deployed; stationed stateside or overseas; are brand new to the Army; or are 30 year veterans.

In addition to The Army Information Line, Army Well-Being's Army Families Online Web site www.ArmyFamiliesOnline.org recently welcomed its 2-millionth visitor this year.

The Army Information Line also celebrates its 25-year existence of providing information and referral services to those Soldiers and Family members.

During the Deployment Information

Reunion briefing schedule announced for family members

From the desk of Marie Durling, Family Programs Specialist

We know it is early to mention reunion briefs but we wanted to get the dates and locations out now so you can make plans to attend the one most convenient for you. All briefs are the same - they are not unit specific. Attend the one that is most convenient for you.

Soldier & Family Reunion Brief Schedule

Date	Armory	Time
Feb. 7, 2009	West Orange	9:30 a.m.
Feb. 21, 2009	Morristown	9:30 a.m.
March 21, 2009	Port Murray	9:30 a.m.
March 22, 2009	Lawrenceville	1 p.m.
April 4, 2009	Jersey City	9:30 a.m.
April 5, 2009	Vineland	1 p.m.
April 16, 2009	Cherry Hill	6:30 p.m.
April 19, 2009	Toms River	1 p.m.
April 27, 2009	Woodbridge	6:30 p.m.
May 6, 2009	Somerset	6:30 p.m.
May 11, 2009	Mount Holly	6:30 p.m.
May 16, 2009	Woodbury	9:30 a.m.
May 21, 2009	Teaneck	6:30 p.m.

Post Office offers boxes, discount rate to FPO/APO addresses

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

Now the U.S. Postal Service is making it easier for families to send care packages with a larger flat rate box and a special discount to FPO/ APO addresses. They are 50 percent larger than the current flat rate box and can be sent to any domestic address for \$12.95. A special military version of the box will carry the "America Supports You" logo and can be shipped to any FPO/ APO address for \$10.95. The new Priority Mail Large Flat-Rate Box is "12 x 12" x 5½". For complete guidelines on mail services to military members overseas visit the USPS website at: www.usps.com/supporting-outroops/welcome.htm?from=household &page=troopsupport.

TroopTube shares video with troops, families

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

TroopTube is the new video-sharing web site for troops and their families. TroopTube is sponsored by Military OneSource and is the only video sharing site for military families approved by the Department of Defense. Users can share videos privately with family members or publicly with the larger community. Access TroopTube through the link <http://www.trooptube.tv/home>.

N.J. Family Readiness Council increases grants to families, businesses

The New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council has increased the amounts of family and business grants up to \$5,000 and \$10,000, respectively. Both are what are known as TIER I grants. TIER II family grants are also available to New Jersey Army and Air National Guard non-deployed service members who were on State Active Duty or State Missions (e.g., hurricanes, floods, border missions) for more than 20 consecutive days. Service members meeting these criteria are eligible to apply for a financial hardship grant up to \$1,500. Applications are available at all New Jersey Army and Air National Guard Family Assistance Centers.

DoD, YMCA team up to offer free memberships

Stars and Stripes--The Department of Defense has announced free family memberships for many servicemembers and their families at participating YMCAs. The new program is effective immediately.

The free YMCA memberships for Guard and Reserve families will be available while the servicemember is deployed for a minimum of six months. The deploying servicemember will also be eligible for three months pre- and postdeployment membership to promote family participation, according to a Friday news release.

Active-duty families assigned to independent duty stations, such as recruiting and ROTC assignments and not currently receiving support from the service component will also be eligible for free memberships. Single servicemembers are eligible for fitness center memberships worth up to \$50 a month.

Active-duty families at select bases will also be eligible as part of a pilot program. Memberships will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis with 300 to 450 family memberships available per joint base location, according to the news release. One of these bases is McGuire AFB/Ft. Dix/ Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station, N.J.

Additionally, 32 hours a month of free respite child care will be available for families of deployed National Guard and Reserve and geographically dispersed active-duty servicemembers in 10 states with YMCA child care programs preapproved by DOD.

Signing up for the program requires a YMCA/DOD eligibility form, a copy of deployment orders and military ID. The YMCA/DOD eligibility form is available at www.militaryonesource.com.

Give parents a break

Child Youth Services at Fort Dix and many other active duty posts provide 16 hours per child per month of free hourly/respite child care to relieve family stress during deployment. Respite care begins 30 days prior to deployment and ends 60 days after return. Drop off the kids while shopping at the commissary or PX or just to get some quiet time to yourself. For additional information, contact Cathy Spiegel at Fort Dix Outreach Services 609-562-2242.

Dog Tags for Kids program

Dog Tags for Kids is a grassroots project which enables service members to send engraved dog tags to their children. The dog tags are provided free and are sent directly to the service members who personally send them to their children at home. The dog tags are engraved with "With Love From Dad/Mom" and include the branch of service, deployment location, and the year. To donate to the project or to request a dog tag for your children, please go to <http://www.dogtagsforkids.com/>.

Child care \$\$\$\$ available for spouses of deployed military

From the desk of Amanda Balas, State Youth Coordinator

Child care money is available for spouses of Title 10 Army National Guard activated Soldiers only. If the spouses are employed, seeking employment (for 60 days) or going to school, they can qualify for a \$100 per month per child stipend for fulltime care (licensed child care provider required). Call the National Guard Child Care Program today to apply 1-888-642-2799 or ngccp@guardfamily.org.

FRG volunteers needed

Family Readiness Groups (FRG) play an important role during deployments.

Yet, in order to be successful, these groups rely on the support of volunteers.

FRGs are comprised of volunteers who donate their time to make sure our Soldier's "Homefront Heroes" are supported through networking with other family members and mutually offering support to one another.

If you would like to be a volunteer or a participant please contact your local Family Assistance Center. You can reach them by calling our toll free number 888-859-0352 and selecting the prompt of the Family Assistance Center near you.

Battlemind supports Soldiers, families through deployment cycle

Battlemind is a term used to describe combat readiness. The first Battlemind product was a mental health post-deployment briefing. It quickly became a training system supporting Soldiers and families across the seven phases of the deployment cycle. The Battlemind system includes separate pre-deployment training modules for Soldiers, unit leaders, health-care providers and spouses. Psychological debriefings are given in theater and upon redeployment. There is also a post-deployment module for spouses and several post-deployment modules for Soldiers. Pre-deployment Battlemind tells Soldiers what they are likely to see, to hear, to think and to feel while deployed - by describing the worst-case scenario. Post-deployment Battlemind addresses safety concerns, relationship issues, normalized combat-related mental health reactions and symptoms -- along with teaching Soldiers when they should seek mental health support for themselves or for their buddies. All of the Battlemind products (training modules, brochures, debriefings and videos are available on the Web site, www.battlemind.org.

Reserve Aid gives support to families of deployed service members

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

Reserve Aid is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to providing financial support to the families of Reserve Service Members called to active duty in all five branches of the Armed Forces. Reserve Aid makes unrestricted, need based grants to military families who have a Reserve service member on full-time deployment to a combat zone or homeland security position. Their goal is to alleviate the emotional and financial burdens placed on the men and women called to serve our country by supporting their families at home. For additional information and application procedures go to: www.reserveaid.org

N.J. licenses, registration extended for deployed troops

New Jerseyans who are on active duty military, in the National Guard or the military reserves, serving in the war on terrorism, are eligible for automatic extensions of a

valid driver license, registration or inspection expiration dates. Go to www.nj.gov/mvc/ for more information.

Financial counseling available for deployed service members

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

The Military Housing Assistance Fund (MHAF) helps military families to become homeowners by providing them with grants to assist them with purchasing a home. The Fund also provides financial counseling to members of the National Guard and Reserves, deployed and serving in combat zones overseas, which are having problems meeting their monthly obligations due to their deployment and activation. Learn more at <http://www.militaryhousingassistancefund.org>. The Fund is a project of the Financial Counselors of America (FCA), a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization founded in 1991 to help Americans manage their finances and get out of debt. Visit the FCA website at <http://www.financialcounselors.org>.

Order a complimentary Blue Star Flag to show your family's service

From the desk of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Hughes, Family Assistance Specialist

The Blue Star Flag first appeared in 1917, when Capt. Robert L. Queissner, who had two sons serving on the front line, designed it as a tribute to their dedication and service. He proudly displayed this flag in the front window of his home and the flag quickly became the unofficial symbol of a child in the service. Also known as a Service Flag, the blue star stands for hope and pride. Order a complimentary Blue Star Flag to honor your loved ones in the service by visiting: www.grantham.edu/promo/freebluestar.php.

Morris County offers program for military families

From the desk of Amanda Balas, State Youth Coordinator

Family Service of Morris County in partnership with the Family Programs Office, New Jersey, would like to announce its Military Families Outreach Program. Based on a community effort, the Military Families Outreach Program strives to support Morris County military personnel and their families, including extended families, pre-deployment, during deployment and post-deployment.

We realize the pressures and problems that may occur when a family member is called to duty, and we want to assist with any services that you may need to ensure quality of life. Social services, support services and mental health services are some of the resources that will be available to Morris County residents. All services offered in this program are free of charge to you and your family and are bound by the highest consideration for complete confidentiality.

For more information about the Military Services Outreach Program, contact Valerie Hart, Military Families Outreach Case Manager at vhart@fsmc.org or call 973-538-5260, extension 326. You can also contact Tammy Rosenthal, Director of child and Adolescent Services at trosenthal@fsmc.org or 973-538-5260. We are privileged to work with you who have given so much for your country!

Sports

Join the New Jersey marathon team for a run in Lincoln, Nebraska

From the desk of Master Sgt. Alex Estrada

The New Jersey National Guard Marathon team is looking for members to join them to train to run in the 32nd Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 3, 2009, in Lincoln, Neb.

The state generally gets four entries into the race. Training ideas and other related data will be furnished once a team is set.

Qualifications to join the team include – male or female, must be able to finish a marathon within 4 hours and have completed such event within an 18 month period.

It generally it takes about 4-6 months to train for this event. Runners would start with a basic running program of 15 to 25 miles per week and increase 1-3 miles weekly during a 16 week period. Long runs of 18 to 22 miles are necessary prior to weeks 14-16 as those are tapering weeks.

In a recent e-mail from coordinators for the Lincoln Marathon, they are adding a "rookie" class for this year's marathon.

It is designed to find new people that may have not completed a full marathon before. There will be an allotment of one per state, and there will be an award for the top three "Rookie" finishers.

This is designed to allow new people the opportunity to experience a marathon and to also experience the National Guard Marathon Program.

If you are interested in participating as an experienced or rookie marathoner on the New Jersey team, contact Master Sgt. Estrada at 609-562-0568. The team members must be submitted to National Guard Bureau by Jan. 18, 2009.

Travel Help, Ideas



Guard history lessons for family at Sea Girt museum

Looking for a local place to take the family for a history lesson? Try the National Guard Museum of New Jersey in Sea Girt.

The museum had a recent face-lift and upgraded its exhibits which tell the story of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guards and the Naval Militia of New Jersey from the Revolutionary war to the Global War on

Terrorism.

The four gallery rooms feature diaries, uniforms, vehicles, weapons and even a Civil War submarine built in 1865.

Open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday and the same hours on the first and second weekends of the month, admission to the museum is free of charge, but a donation is requested. Groups who would like to make arrangements for tours should call 732-974-5966.

Armed Forces Vacation Club offers affordable lodging

The Armed Forces Vacation Club is a "space available" program offering Department of Defense affiliated personnel affordable condominium vacations at over 3,500 resorts around the world. Visit www.afvclub.com/ for more information.

Scholarship, Education News

SSG Frank T. Carvill scholarship for Jersey Guard kids

Friends and family of Staff Sgt. Frank T. Carvill, a member of the New Jersey Army National Guard who was killed while serving in Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, have established scholarship in his name. According to those close to him, Carvill was a strong advocate of education and he felt it was important to help his fellow Guardsmen and their families.



The SSG Frank T. Carvill Memorial Scholarship Award is designed to honor and remember Frank Carvill. Applications are available by contacting Peggy Carvill-Liguori at drpeg639@aol.com. Deadline for submitting applications is **April 30, 2009**.

These are the eligibility requirements for the scholarships –

- § The applicant's parent or guardian must be a member of the New Jersey National Guard.
- § The applicant may apply for the scholarship while attending high school or presently be in or accepted by a college/vocational program as a full-time student.
- § The applicant must volunteer time to the community.
- § The applicant must have a minimum GPA of 2.75
- § The applicant must compose an essay stating:
 - How volunteerism affects your life
 - How the U.S. military has influenced your life

Help available to students studying for SAT/ACT

In cooperation with the Department of Defense, eKnowledge Corporation, a leading supplier of interactive test preparation products for college entrance exams, along with a group of NFL players, have donated more than \$16 million worth of multimedia SAT/ACT Test Preparation products to service members and their families worldwide.

Now in its fourth year, the eKnowledge/NFL player sponsorship effort has shipped more than 90,000 free SAT/ACT test preparation programs, valued at \$200, to military servicemembers and their families.

The eKnowledge SAT and ACT test prep programs come in either a single DVD or two CD-ROM set that include more than 11 hours of high quality video training/instruction with up to 40 hours of student interactive learning participation. The SAT and ACT test prep programs can be used as a stand-alone instruction tool to prepare thoroughly for the SAT and ACT, or as a supplement to other SAT and ACT preparation materials. Each student can select the areas where they need additional or special training/instruction, and can then study at their own pace using the 120 video lessons which comprise the SAT and Act test prep programs. The program also provides the student with feedback on their learning progress, test readiness and more.

Those military families interested in receiving free eKnowledge products under this sponsorship can complete an online request form at <http://eknowledge.com/military> or visit the Department of Defense <http://militaryhomefront.dod.mil> Web site for more details. Copies can also be requested by calling 951-256-4076 or via e-mail at support@eknowledge.com.

College scholarships available through commissary agency

The Defense Commissary Agency is making college scholarships worth \$1,500 available to qualified children of military families, including those in the National Guard. Applications are now available at commissaries worldwide or through a link at www.commissaries.com or at www.militaryscholar.org.

According to Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., Defense Commissary Agency director and chief executive officer, the program has awarded more than \$6.4 million in scholarship to more than 4,000 children of military families since the program began in 2001.

Qualified applicants are dependent, unmarried children of active duty, Reserve, Guard or retired military personnel. Applicants must be under the age of 23. Also survivors of service members who died while on active duty or survivors of individuals who died while receiving retired pay from the military may apply for the scholarship.

Eligibility is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, along with their sponsors, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current ID card. The applicants must be planning to attend, or already be attending, an accredited college or university full time in the fall of 2009 or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Applicants will be asked to submit an essay on the following topic: What would you place inside a time capsule to help people in the next century understand military life today? Applications must be turned in by **Feb. 18, 2009**. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

Education news for NJARNG

Education Services Brochure Booklet (ESB2)

Access the New Jersey Army National Guard's ESB2 at www.nj.gov/military/education. The ESB2 is a comprehensive guide with links and shortcuts to civilian education benefits available to New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers.

G.I. Bill Notice of Basic Eligibility

New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers can print their Eligibility of Mobilized Soldier notification letter for CH 1607 as well as Notice Of Basic Eligibility for CH 1606 at For Army National Guard Education Benefits, please use <https://www.nationalguardbenefits.com>; click on G.I. Bill Home Page.

American Legion offers scholarships, booklet on their Web site

The American Legion has scholarship information on their Web site – www.legion.org – including the 152-page booklet, *Need a Lift*, which is a complete financial aid reference guide for veterans, family members and the American Legion family. When you get on the site, click on “Scholarship Information” in the “Useful Links” block.

Association News

NGANJ group life insurance available to members

Are you covered by the NGANJ Group Life Insurance Program? As a member of either the Officers or the Enlisted Association, you are entitled to enroll in your Association Life Insurance Program. This special program provides from \$5,000 to \$50,000 of Life Insurance for you, “round the clock”. Premiums range from as little as \$2 per month and may be payroll-deducted from your drill check. Family coverage is also available at low rates designed for you as a member of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard. Think of it!! No aviation exclusions...No hazardous duty restrictions...No war clauses...No checks to write. Family coverage includes spouses and all children. Information can be obtained by contacting retired CWO Jack Petrosilli at 609-530-6843, or retired Brig. Gen. Robert S. Dutko Sr. at 609-273-1004. Enrollment forms can be obtained by calling retired Col. Frank L. Carlone, Program Coordinator at 732-249-8335.

ESGR News, Information

Guard, Reserve members and families encourage to nominate employers

The Department of Defense opened the nomination season for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award on Nov. 1. National Guard and Reserve members and their families are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers who have gone above and beyond in their support of employees serving in the seven reserve components.

Almost one-half of the U.S. military is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve. The Department of Defense shares these citizen warriors with their civilian employers, many of whom provide significant support to their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

In 2008 the Jersey City Fire Department was the first New Jersey employers to receive the Employer Support Freedom Award, one of fifteen employers bestowed with the high honor.

“The number of nominations was outstanding last year,” said retired Army Col. Carmen Venticinque, chairman, New Jersey state field committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. “I encourage the more than 20,000 citizen Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard members to nominate their employer this year.”

The New Jersey ESGR held a luncheon for all the Freedom Award nominees and the Jersey City Fire Department was honored with the Pro Patria award along with Campbell Soup and Jenny Engineering.

Nominations will be accepted at www.freedomaward.mil/nominate.aspx until **Jan. 19,**



2009. The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the U.S. government's highest recognition given to outstanding employers.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. More than 100 employers have received this prestigious award.

For questions regarding the nomination process, please contact Hank Pierre of the New Jersey ESGR at 609-562-0156.

Veterans Information

Help for small business owners

If you are ready to start your own business, grow or expand, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can help. The SBA offers many programs and services to help Veteran entrepreneurs succeed. For more information on how SBA can help you start, grow and build your business, contact: Frank Burke at 973-645-6049 or e-mail frank.burke@sba.gov Visit the SBA New Jersey website at www.sba.gov/nj



VA Suicide Hotline

To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans. VA's hot line will be staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. They will take toll-free calls from across the country and work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers. The toll-free hot line number is 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255).

Purple Heart Hall of Honor looking to build database

From information provided by The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

Since 1932, 1.7 million Purple Heart medals have been awarded to America's servicemen and women wounded or lost in combat, according to the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor located in New Windsor, N.Y.

The Hall of Honor is the nation's sole repository dedicated to the preservation and collection of Purple Heart stories and is currently building a database and is looking for those servicemembers who have been awarded the medal.

The database provides information about each Purple Heart recipient and can include scanned documents and photographs that will enhance his or her story.

To enroll a Purple Heart recipient in the Roll of Honor, you must submit an application form which can be found on the Web site, www.thepurpleheart.com. Verification of the award is needed – DD-214 or DD-215, military orders, Purple Heart certificate or other supporting documentation. The Hall of Honor is also collecting a photograph of each recipient as well as letters and news articles to add to the database.

To learn more about the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, visit the Web site at www.thepurpleheart.com or call toll free 877-28HONOR. The Hall of Honor is open year-round at 374 Temple Hill Road, New Windsor, N.Y., on the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic site, the final post of George Washington's Army.

DoD develops compensation and benefits handbook

DoD announced it has developed a comprehensive handbook describing compensation and other benefits service members and their families would be entitled to upon separation or retirement as a result of serious injury or illness.

"The Compensation and Benefits Handbook is the one source of information that covers everything a seriously ill and injured service member will need during his or her recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration," said Ronald A. Winter, principal deputy

assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs.

The handbook was compiled in cooperation with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and the Social Security Administration. Additionally; there are references to assistance provided by other governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

"The handbook describes the disability eligibility process, various program qualifications, application procedures, and numerous resources with associated contact information," said Sharon Gunselman, policy and resource analyst for the Department of Defense.

Web sites and toll-free numbers are provided, and the electronic version includes hyperlinks. The electronic version of the handbook will be updated frequently and the hard copy of the compensation and benefits handbook will be updated annually.

The electronic version of the handbook can be found on the five Web sites listed below:

<http://turbotap.org>

<https://www.nko.navy.mil>

<http://www.npc.navy.mil>

<https://www.aw2.army.mil>

<https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/AFP40/d/1073755231/Files/C&BHandbook>

Helmets to Hardhats

The New Jersey State Building and Construction Trades Council's Helmets to Hardhats Program (NJ H2H) is designed to help transitioning military personnel, National Guardsmen and Reservists find the careers in the building and construction industry. The program seeks to help military members find a career in one of 15 affiliated trades, such as electrical workers, carpenters and painters.

They work in cooperation with the national Helmets to Hardhats program, adding a personal component to the program's on-line services. NJ H2H offers veterans preparation for successful application to any of New Jersey's registered apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades. Services include career counseling, entrance test preparation and referral to supportive services.

For program registration and information, visit online at www.njbctc.org/h2h or contact at 732-499-7295 or at H2H@njbctc.org.

Web site provides support to separating military members

TurboTAP (Transition Assistance Program) is an easy to use, interactive Web portal that provides life-long support to separating military service members (Active Duty, Guard and Reserve) and their families. It is a single source starting point for accessing key resources available for servicemembers transitioning out of the military at any point in their military career. Resources include Department of Defense, Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Education, Small Business Administration, the National Veterans Corporation and the National Guard Bureau. For more information go to www.TurboTAP.org or email TAPHelp@military-inc.com.

DMAVA Veterans Outreach Campaign continues

The DMAVA Veterans Outreach Campaign continues with kiosk displays at selected malls throughout New Jersey. The schedule is as follows:

January 6*, 7, 8	Moorestown Mall
February 3*, 4, 5	Paramus Park Mall
March 3*, 4, 5	Monmouth Mall

*Medal ceremonies begin at 10:30 a.m. on these dates. The kiosk will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

When retiring, check for military service earnings

Here is some information from the Social Security Administration pertaining to military service earnings that may come in handy to those planning on retiring soon. You can find more about this credit at <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>.

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty, including active duty for training, you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. Special extra earnings credits are NOT given for inactive duty training. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

If your active military service occurred from 1957-1967, the extra credits will be added to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits. If the time was from 1968-2001, there is no need to do anything for the extra credits; they were automatically added to your record. Time after 2001 receives no special extra earnings.

How much is the credit? For service from 1957-1977, you will be credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay. For service from 1978-2001, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with \$100 in earnings up to a maximum in of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, and did not complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings.

N.J. Vietnam Veterans Memorial



www.njvvmf.org.

N.J. Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Educational Center's upcoming events:

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Free guided tours of the Memorial are offered on the first Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

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For further information call 1-800-648-VETS or visit