

Veteran Journal

"Serving Those Who Served"

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
MARCH 2009



A WORD FROM THE DCVA

Dear Veterans,
What a year this department and the veterans' community had. You can use many words to describe 2008. Pick a word, memorable, historic, hectic, fulfilling or successful, and that one word would certainly describe how those 365 days unfolded.

Let me recap the highlights of 2008:

◆ World War II Memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day; the memorial on State Street across from the Statehouse is an educational and majestic tribute to the men and women that served to protect our freedoms.

◆ Yellow Ribbon Commission processed and approved nearly 200 grant applications before the end of the year.

◆ DMAVA Veteran Service Officers assisted with nearly 6,000 Veterans Administration claims, worth approximately \$700 million, nearly a 10 percent increase from 2007.

◆ The construction of a 3,161 niche columbarium began at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The facility remains the busiest state cemetery in the country.

◆ Vets across the state supported the Soldiers and families of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in the largest deployment of the New Jersey Army National Guard since World War II.

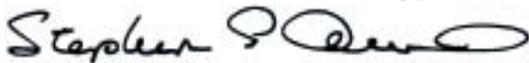
The list for 2009 includes welcoming back the Jersey Guard Soldiers in June and the first meeting of the Commission on Women Veterans.

The department is actively developing plans to reduce expenses. We have already relocated four Veterans Service Offices from leased space to National Guard Amories and are looking at other offices that could be moved to save tax dollars.

We will see the addition at Doyle completed and hopefully will break ground to begin a 37-bed expansion at Veterans Haven, to help additional homeless veterans.

Speaking of Veterans Haven, this is the first year when filing your New Jersey state income tax you can dedicate all or part of a refund to support the efforts to reclaim homeless veterans back as productive members of society.

I look forward to another outstanding year in working with the veterans' community.



VETERAN STIMULUS PAYMENT

As part of the President's Stimulus Initiative, anyone receiving Social Security or Railroad Retirement Benefits or any veteran receiving VA Compensation, regardless of rating, will receive a \$250 check. Checks will be issued in late May.



Retired Col. Stephen G. Abel (left), Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, poses for a photo with Leonard Lomell (right), 2nd Ranger Battalion and the statue of The Lone Soldier at the dedication ceremony for the New Jersey World War II Memorial at Veterans Park on Nov. 11, 2008. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

VeteranN Journal

Jon S. Corzine

Governor

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth

The Adjutant General

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The **VeteranN Journal** is an official publication of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and is intended to serve New Jersey's veterans, their families, friends and concerned individuals and groups. All correspondence should be sent to: Veteran Journal Editor, NJDMAVA/PA, PO Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340.

Cover Photo: Lady Victory

Governor Jon S. Corzine (left) and Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, applaud at the unveiling of Lady Victory during the dedication ceremony for the New Jersey World War II Memorial located across from the State House in Trenton on Nov. 11. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

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Message from the Governor

Dear Veteran,

Without question 2008 was an historic year for New Jersey veterans, and I was certainly proud of my opportunity to honor service veterans from the past, the present, and the future over this past year. I am equally proud of the service of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, as they have had an outstanding year in support of the veterans' community through increased outreach, assistance in filing for federal benefits, and providing support to thousands of brave men and women who proudly wore their uniform in service to our state and nation.

One of the proudest moments during this past year was the Veterans Day dedication of the state World War II Memorial in Trenton, a long-overdue recognition to those who put their lives on hold to travel to far away lands, defending democracy and fighting tyranny and oppression. The men and women who served the state and nation during this time of crisis gave us a tremendous gift – the gift of freedom. I encourage you to learn more about the sacrifices of what has been called the “Greatest Generation” with a visit to the World War II Memorial.

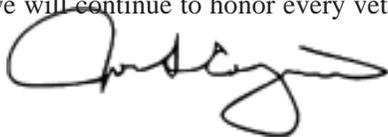
Today we are faced with new challenges, in yet another part of the world. The number of New Jerseyans protecting our freedoms right now is at an historic high, with more than 3,000 citizen soldiers involved in combat operations. I had the opportunity to personally thank these brave men and women during a visit to Iraq, and was proud of their sense of duty, dedication, and responsibility as they take on the most difficult of tasks. These soldiers represent every county in New Jersey. Some are new recruits, others are seasoned combat veterans, but they are all making sacrifices.

And let us not forget the “home front heroes,” the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, husbands, wives, and children, who worry each day about their loved one and must make difficult adjustments in their lives. Also there are the employers, who must make do without their employee for a year. I truly appreciate how the veterans' community has stepped up to stand side-by-side with these individuals who are making sacrifices of their own in service of the state and nation.

But perhaps the biggest challenge lies ahead of us in June, when the state will have the largest influx of combat veterans since World War II. This is when the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team comes back from its tour of duty overseas. It will be the duty of the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and all of New Jersey to assist our veterans upon their return.

There are certainly post deployment programs in place to help with the re-integration into families and the workplace, and an excellent post traumatic stress disorder hotline ready to talk to the veteran and refer for treatment. And we have the Yellow Ribbon Commission and the Guard's State Family Readiness Council ready to respond to financial needs of the families. But most importantly we have the collective consciousness of a thankful New Jersey, and we have you, the veteran, to let these newest brothers and sisters in arms know they are not alone. They will need the opportunity to speak to someone who has served in a combat zone, to tell their own story. This will be the opportunity to give a much-deserved “welcome home” to these new veterans and let them know their service is appreciated beyond measure.

There are memorial services, dedications, and medal ceremonies, but most importantly it is the services that New Jersey provides to our half-million veterans that is the greatest measure of how we honor their service. And with your support I know we will continue to honor every veteran that calls the Garden State home.



Governor Jon S. Corzine (right) looks at the envelope detailing the location of two time capsules buried at the New Jersey World War II Memorial at Veterans Park presented to him by Vineland Veterans Memorial Home resident 100-year-old Frank Cuccia (second from left), 13th Airborne Division paratrooper, U.S. Army, as Maj. Gen Glenn K. Rieth (left), The Adjutant General of New Jersey, and retired Col. Stephen G. Abel (second from right), Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, look on at the dedication ceremony for the Memorial on Nov. 11, 2008. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.



New Jersey Honors Greatest Generation

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

In an event unprecedented in its scope, New Jersey honored more than half million of its citizens at the dedication ceremony of the New Jersey World War II Memorial at Veterans Park located across the street from the State House on Nov. 11, 2008.

More than 1,900 people braved frigid temperatures in the shadow of the Capital building to watch as a red, white and blue banner emblazoned with the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team crest and signed by the 50th's Soldiers was lowered by Governor Jon S. Corzine and the Adjutant General of New Jersey, Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, revealing the statue Lady Victory, the Memorial's centerpiece.

"You have taught all of us who continue to wear the uniform about humility, perseverance, and the love of our nation," said Maj. Gen. Rieth. "I stand beside you today in admiration of all that you have accomplished throughout your lives. Each of you is an American Hero."

New Jersey is estimated to have contributed more than 560,000 men and women to the armed forces, including 16 Medal of Honor recipients. An estimated 89,000 World War II veterans still live in New Jersey.

"As a proud New Jerseyan, a former Marine, and as a

child of that Greatest Generation, I believed that our salute should not just be expressed in words and sentiments alone," Governor Corzine said. "It had to be solidified in granite and stone for eternity, to show all future generations what New Jersey World War vets did for this state and the country."

The \$7.6 million memorial is comprised of 3,000 pieces of



A veteran gazes on one of the four storyboard panels at the New Jersey World War II Memorial at Veterans Park.

"It is especially fitting that we hold this ceremony on Veterans Day, recognizing service members living and dead who safeguarded this nation so our children and grandchildren can live in freedom." Governor Jon S. Corzine



Arthur Seltzer (left), 4th Signal Battalion, U.S. Army, holds up a dollar bill that was signed by the Soldiers on his Higgins Boat (landing craft) on D-Day as Governor Jon S. Corzine (center) and Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth (right) The Adjutant General watch.

granite, a one-ton statue of Lady Victory, and a half-ton statue of The Lone Soldier, which were designed by sculptor Thomas Jay Warren, who previously sculpted the centerpiece for the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the New Jersey Korean War Veterans Memorial. Groundbreaking occurred on March 15, 2008, with DHM Design Firm and Neshaminy Construction Inc., responsible for construction.

Among the keynote speakers were World War II veterans' Senator Frank R. Lautenberg, Army Signal Corps; former Governor Brendan T. Byrne, 15th Air Force, Army Air Forces; Tuskegee Airman Dr. Leslie Hayling and Leonard Lomell, 2nd Ranger Battalion.

Lomell occupies a special place in the history of World



Anna M. Hoffman (left), Women's Army Corps, and Tuskegee Airman George Watson Sr. (right), 366th Air Service Group, U.S. Army Air Corps, perform the Pledge of Allegiance.



Three generations of servicemen (l-r): World War II veteran Vito Tango, U.S. Navy; his son Maj. Jonathon Tango, New Jersey Army National Guard and grandson Danny Silvester, U.S. Coast Guard perform the Two Bell ceremony to honor the fallen.

War II. In Stephen Ambrose's book "D-Day June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II", Lomell is recognized as the single individual — other than Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower — most responsible for the success of D-Day. Lomell discovered and disabled the five 155-millimeter coastal artillery guns at Pointe du Hoc, which could have reached the troops landing on Omaha and Utah Beaches endangering the entire invasion process.

The Memorial will serve as a fitting remembrance to honor the Greatest Generation and the New Jerseyans who made the ultimate sacrifice to save the world from tyranny.



New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers render a rifle salute.

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Photo and story by Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA

The key to serving New Jersey's veterans is simple: be there for them.

For the Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, that means being in the places veterans can find them, said Gary R. Englert, the director of veterans services.

"The idea is to have our guys spread out over the population centers," Englert said recently.

And they are, in 14 stand-alone offices, several satellite locations and inside the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices in Newark and Philadelphia.

But a few of the VSO offices have moved over the past few months and at least one more will relocate in the next several months. Englert and other DMAVA officials want to make sure that the word gets out.

The VSO offices that have moved cover the following counties: Atlantic/Cape May, Camden/Gloucester, Hudson and Union. None moved a distance greater than five miles. The Atlantic/Cape May VSO is now in the Atlantic City armory, the Camden/Gloucester VSO is now in the Woodbury armory, the Hudson VSO has relocated to the Jersey City armory and the Elizabeth VSO can now be found in the VA's Newark office. The moves will save DMAVA about \$130,000 in lease payments.

The most recent move was the Camden/Gloucester VSO, from leased space on Crown Point Road in Thorofare to the Woodbury Armory at 685 N. Evergreen Ave., about two miles away, in the heart of the Gloucester County seat.

The two VSOs assigned to that office, Anthony D'Errico and David Joost, and secretary Diane Rosci spent a recent day carrying boxes, checking phone lines and settling in to their new office on the first floor in the rear of the armory.

D'Errico said his biggest concern about his new digs is being found. "The last thing we want is for a veteran who hasn't



VSO Anthony D'Errico unpacks at his new office at the Woodbury Armory. He and VSO David Joost and secretary Diane Rosci moved from leased space in Thorofare in January.

been here in a couple of years to show up at our old office and panic," he said. "We want to get the word out that we moved."

Word got out quickly. The first veteran showed up less than an hour after they opened up their new office on Jan. 27.

Joost, who has been a VSO since 1977 and has occupied a number of different offices around the state during the years, figures all of the new locations will work because they're in armories.

"An armory is a good place to be found," Joost said. "Go into any town and ask where the armory is and just about everybody will be able to direct you there."

Englert said keeping the VSO offices easily accessible is a top DMAVA priority. New Jersey's VSOs helped more than 6,000 claimants collect more than \$700 million in federal benefits in the last fiscal year – a 10 percent jump from the year before.

"These offices take care of veterans – and serve as economic engines for the state of New Jersey," he said.

Atlantic/Cape May VSO

New Location: Atlantic City Armory, 1008 Absecon Blvd.
Atlantic City, NJ 08401-1999
609-441-3060/3061, Fax: 609-441-3899
Old Location: 1601 Atlantic Ave., Atlantic City

Camden/Gloucester VSO

New Location: Woodbury Armory, 658 N Evergreen Ave.
Woodbury, NJ 08096
856-853-4184/4185/4186, Fax: 856-384-3781
Old Location: 215 Crown Point Rd., Thorofare

Hudson VSO

New Location: 678 Montgomery St.
Jersey City, NJ 07306
201-536-3401/3402/3403, Fax: 201-536-3404
Old Location: 438 Summit Ave., Jersey City

Union VSO

New Location: VA Regional Office, 20 Washington Pl.
Newark, NJ 07102-3230
973-297-3220, Fax: 973-648-2356
Old Location: 1196 Chestnut St., Elizabeth

Women Vets Commission gets to work

Photo and story by Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA

A Soldier who served in Iraq, a former Navy welder, an Air Force refueler pilot, two Marines and a World War II veteran long recognized as one of New Jersey's most passionate veterans' advocates.

Those are the backgrounds of just a few of the members of the state's newest veterans' advisory board, the Commission on Women Veterans.

The 15-member body held its first monthly meeting on Jan. 29 and began laying plans for an ambitious outreach program for women who took off their military uniform for the final time decades ago as well as those still actively serving.

Air Force Command Master Sgt. Donna Wertz, a commission member, said women who have experienced combat in America's ongoing conflicts deserve special attention.

"The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have opened a lot of people's eyes," said Wertz, who is also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "Females, when they get home, often have no where to turn. They don't want to be seen as whiners. But they still may need help."

Gov. Jon Corzine signed the law creating the commission and its charter to assess the needs of women veterans and to recommend changes or improvements to programs, policies and laws that affect them. Twelve of the commission members must be women. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs retired Col. Stephen G. Abel serves as one of three ex officio members as does a representative from the Department of Community Affairs and from the Department of Labor.

At the commission's first meeting held at the Brig. General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, the representatives heard from Raymond Zawacki, the state adjutant for the American Legion, who serves on the state Veterans' Services Council. He promised the women an exhilarating experience and recommended



Marine Corps veteran Marinee Temme (l-r) and Navy Reservist Jennifer L. Tanforan listen as Air National Guard Maj. Yvonne Mays makes a point and Army National Guard Lt. Col. Terese Acocella looks on. The women were attending the first meeting of the New Jersey Commission on Women Veterans on Jan. 27.

they establish contacts at all U.S. Veterans Administration facilities serving New Jersey as well as DMAVA facilities, such as Veterans Haven, a transitional housing facility for homeless veterans located in Winslow Township.

Several of the commission members still in uniform said they anticipate the greatest needs of the newest veterans will be counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder. Others anticipate that some women returning from combat zones may have been victims of sexual assault or harassment, a situation common enough that the VA has a name for it: military sexual trauma.

"It's one of the things that people don't like to talk about, but needs to be addressed," said Maj. Yvonne

Mays, a commission member who serves in the New Jersey Air National Guard.

Commission members said they also want to make more women who have served in the military – especially those that served long ago – aware they have veterans' status and may qualify for various benefits.

THE COMMISSION ON WOMEN VETERANS

Lt. Col. Terese B. Acocella, New Jersey Army National Guard
Virginia Dempsey, Disabled American Veterans
Anna Hoffman, Womens Army Corps
Maj. Kimberly Jamison, Air Force
Capt. Gwyn R. Johnson, Coast Guard
Mary J. Kelly, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Maj. Yvonne Mays, New Jersey Air National Guard
Lisa Szymanski, American Veterans
Jennifer L. Tanforan, Navy
Marinee Temme, Marine Corps
Chief Master Sgt. Donna Wertz, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Anna Elizabeth Yersevich, American Legion

Ex-Officio Members

retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, DMAVA
Janice Kovach, Department of Community Affairs
Tracie Yeoman, Department of Labor

Cremaains to receive final honors

Story by Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA; photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

The disturbing news reports from around the country began trickling in a few years ago and Roman P. Nidzwiedz, a decorated Vietnam veteran from Evesham, couldn't stop thinking about them.

Listening to the news, he learned that the cremated remains of veterans had been discovered languishing on shelves in funeral homes, hospitals and prisons, unclaimed and unburied for years. More than 100 at a mental hospital in Oregon. Another 25 at a nursing home in Nevada. Scattered reports of smaller numbers from funeral homes across the country.

The likelihood that at least a few veterans' remains remained in limbo in New Jersey spurred Nidzwiedz and several fellow members of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 899 in Bordentown to action. They began calling state legislators, ultimately finding allies in Assemblyman Jack Connors (D-Burlington), chairman of the Assembly Veterans and Military Affairs Committee and Senator Jeff Van Drew (D-Cape May/Cumberland/Atlantic).

The three-year effort paid off on Feb. 4 when Gov. Jon Corzine signed A2613/S1579, a law that gives veterans' organizations the right to receive unclaimed remains of veterans in order arrange for a proper military burial at sea or on land at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery in Burlington County. The governor signed the bill into law at the cemetery in a conference room filled with more than two dozen veterans.

"Every veteran who served and defended our nation deserves the dignity of a proper burial," Corzine said. "This law ensures that all veterans are honored with the respect and dignity owed them by the State of New Jersey and the United States."

In addition to the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, other veterans' organizations that supported the legislation include the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, American Veterans, Catholic War Veterans, Jewish War Veterans and the Marine Corps



Roman P. Nidzwiedz (second from left), Assemblyman Jack Connors (fourth from left) and Senator Jeff Van Drew (third from right), along with veterans group representatives watch as Governor Jon S. Corzine (seated) signs into law A2613/S1579 granting veteran organizations the right to receive unclaimed veterans remains and ensure that they receive a proper military burial.

League. A group of volunteers from these organizations and other veterans' groups will serve on the New Jersey Mission of Honor Remains Committee, which will coordinate the transfer of the remains.

In cases where the remains are to be buried at the Doyle Veterans Cemetery, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will play a key role in ensuring that the remains are, in fact, that of a veteran, said retired Col. Stephen G. Abel, the Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs. Abel said DMAVA will work with veterans' groups to ensure that all documents related to the military service record of the deceased are in order, as is required for interment in the Doyle Cemetery, the busiest state-operated veterans' cemetery in the United States.

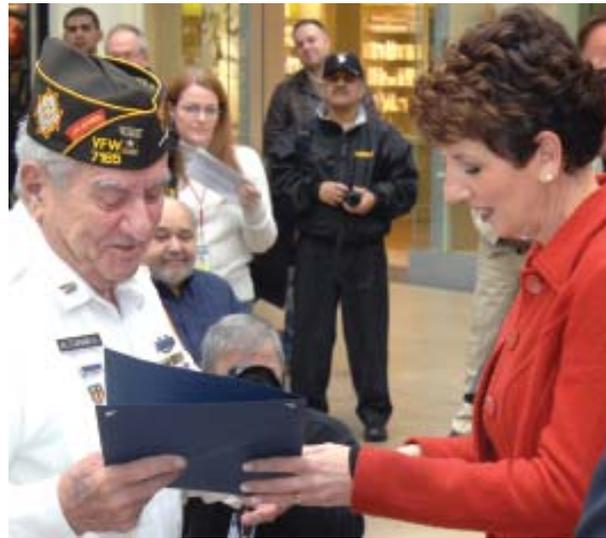
The first interment — the remains of a World War II veteran who died more than two decades ago and then remained at a funeral home in Bergen County — will be at the Doyle cemetery in April.

Nidzwiedz will be there. He did not know that man when he was alive. It doesn't matter.

"He who shed blood on the battlefield is my brother," Nidzwiedz said. "Always."

OUTREACH PROGRAM REACHES VETERANS

The Veterans Outreach program made four successful stops in recent months with the three-day placement of the information kiosk preceded by a presentation of state service medals. Photos clockwise, starting top right: at the Deptford Mall, Floyd Winter (right) receives certificates from Gary Englert (left), Director, Division of Veterans Services, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Alvin Anderson (right) wore his Marine Corps jacket to the Moorestown Mall as the World War II veteran received the Distinguished Service Medal from retired Army Col. Stephen G. Abel (left), Deputy Commissioner, NJDMAVA. Assemblywoman Connie Wagner (right) thanks World War II veteran Herbert Altounian (left) at the Paramus Park Mall ceremony. At the Menlo Park Mall the courtyard was filled as Vietnam veteran Ian Wallace (left) is presented the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal by Sgt. Joe Nyzio (right), Division of Veterans Services, NJDMAVA. Photos by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



2008-2009 NJDMAVA VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE

March 3*, 4, 5 – Monmouth Mall

April 21*, 22, 23 – Quaker Bridge Mall

May 7* – Medal Ceremony only at 11 a.m.

New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial
PNC Bank Arts Center

May 19*, 20, 21 – Hamilton Mall

JUNE - WILDWOOD CONVENTION CENTER

June 4-5 – Elks State Convention

June 10-12 – American Legion State Convention

June 17-19 – VFW State Convention

Kiosk Hours 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. daily

* Asterisk indicates medal presentation at 10:30 a.m.



AIRMEN AND FOURTH-GRADERS SERENADE VETERANS

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA

Nineteen Airmen from the 177th Fighter Wing and the 108th Air Refueling Wing, along with more than 90 fourth-graders from the Seaview Avenue School in Linwood, visited the residents at the Vineland Veterans' Memorial Home for the Annual Holiday "Songfest" on Dec. 17.

The Wings have been visiting the Home for more than eight years.

Each year, the Wings raise money from individual donations and through the various councils and organizations to purchase items on the Vineland Home's Specific Needs List. This year, the Wings raised more than \$1,400, enabling them to buy toiletries, sweat pants, Wii games and accessories, headphones, T-shirts, fleece pajamas and DVDs.

Upon arrival, Airmen and fourth-graders were issued



Staff Sgt. Mario Gray (back row, left), 108th Air Refueling Wing is joined by 177th Fighter Wing members Senior Master Sgt. Michael D. Monteith (c), Tech. Sgt. Donald L. Griffin (r) and Seaview Avenue School fourth-graders at the annual "Songfest" at Vineland Veterans Memorial Home.



Senior Master Sgt. Nicholas Capille Jr. (r) chats with a Vineland resident and staff member.

candy canes and holiday greeting cards, assigned to groups and sent out to spread cheer to the residents. The students' presence was essential according to one Airman, "They'll drown-out our voices."

Congregating in cafeterias, day rooms, as well as serenading individuals in their rooms (those residents that are bed-ridden), the carolers passed out cards and candy canes, sang holiday songs and chatted with the residents.

"As always though, the children stole the show," said Master Sgt. Steven J. Sabato, 108th Air Refueling Wing. "I've learned over the years that you just can't up-stage 90 caroling fourth-graders."



Vets Project kicks off in Union County

Photo and story by Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA

An innovative effort to help veterans who get in trouble with the law kicked off recently in Union County, the second county in the state to adopt what's known as the Veterans Assistance Project.

The project is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Judiciary and it aims to identify every former and current service member who enters the criminal justice system. Mentors are assigned to the veterans deemed most likely to benefit from extra help in obtaining services such as mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and specialized benefits provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In short, the program's goal is to help the veterans help themselves and hopefully prevent them from running afoul of the law again.

"This is not a free ticket," said Army National Guard Col. James Grant, Director of the Joint Staff. "But this tells a veteran 'You just did a service for your nation. We realize this may have caused changes in your life.'"

In Union County, home to an estimated 33,000 veterans, nearly a dozen volunteer mentors underwent a day of training in Elizabeth on Feb. 19 led by Soldiers from the Army National Guard's 254th Regiment (Combat Arms). Many of the volunteers were Union County Sheriff's officers. All of those officers were veterans, most with combat experience in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Among them is Officer Matthew Zucosky, who served two tours in Iraq and wears as part of his sheriff uniform a tie clip bearing an eagle, globe and anchor – the Marine Corps symbol.

"This program should help a lot of veterans," said Zucosky, who left the military in 2005. "I see guys all the time who are having problems and need extra help."

Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, who served with the Marines in Korea, was pleased so many of his officers volunteered to become mentors.

"It's extra work so it's not the kind of thing I would ever order somebody to do," he said. "But they're excited to help out and I'm sure they'll make a difference."

Army National Guard Master Sgt. Richard Roswell led the mentors through a number of practice scenarios, such as how to guide reluctant veterans to learn to help themselves and how to respond to a phone call from a vet in crises and



Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich (l) makes a point during training for Veterans Assistance Project volunteer mentors while New Jersey Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Gerald O'Rourke and Union County Veterans Service Officer Anna Kazmierczyk (r) look on.

contemplating suicide or considering hurting someone else.

He told the mentors to expect that many of the veterans will be suffering from conditions brought about by combat, such as post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury – which can severely impair someone's memory and judgment.

"These are people who may have a lot of appointments, from seeing their lawyer, or doctor, or mental health specialist," Roswell said. "They may need your help remembering some of these things. You aren't there to do things for them, you're there to help them help themselves."

The Veterans Assistance Project launched in Atlantic County in December 2008. So far, 31 veterans have been referred by the Atlantic County courts to the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The program is geared toward providing services to veterans, not diverting veterans from the courts. Veterans who are charged with indictable and non-indictable offenses, other than minor traffic matters, as well as veterans who are on probation, are eligible to participate in the program.

Union County veterans in need of assistance or anyone interested in becoming a volunteer mentor may call Moise Abraham, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Veterans Service Officer for Union County at 973-297-3336 or Salvatore Mione, Union County Office of Veterans' Affairs at 908-527-4946.



SUPPORTING THE DEPLOYED

State American Legion Commander Richard Zalinkanskas, (r), shares a story with Lt. Col. John Scanell, 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion commander during an New Jersey Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve business and civic leader visit to the unit. New Jersey Catholic War Veterans commander Frank Kowalski and Marine Corps League state commandant Phil Uecker were among the veterans service organization leaders on the trip. The Battalion trained at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. prior to being mobilized in January for a one-year deployment to Iraq. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kryn P. Westhoven, JFHQ-NJ/PA



MEMORIAL DEDICATED

Assemblyman Matthew W. Milam (l-r), District 1, joins Dennis W. Moriarty, Commander, Shore Chapter #701, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Sam Haspel, past state Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart and Vineland Veterans Memorial Home Chief Executive Officer Joseph Romano for the dedication of the Purple heart Memorial at the Veterans Home on Nov. 8, 2008. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Up to 20 residents of the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home will be able to enjoy gardening year round as a greenhouse donated by the American Legion was dedicated on Nov. 6, 2008. State Senator Jeff Van Drew joined past state commander Frank Calandrilo and past department president Dolores Gonzalez at the ceremony. The greenhouse which features wheelchair height work stations is part of the 2007-2008 State Commander's Project's. Other American Legion projects included the donation of two vehicles to assist the participates in the Veterans haven transitional housing program for homeless veterans. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.



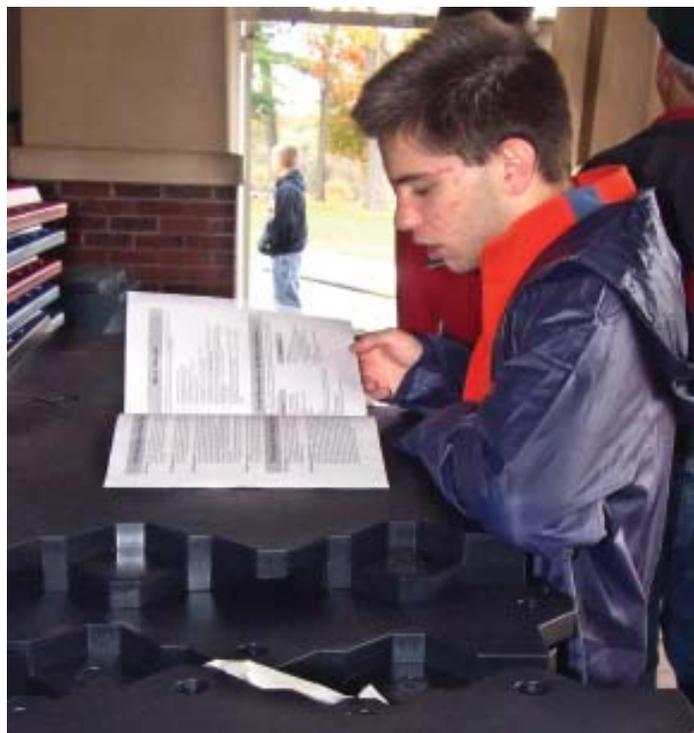
CONTRIBUTION FOR LADY VICTORY

Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of New Jersey officers, Adjutant Robert Pinto (l) and Commander Richard C. Bradshaw (r) present retired Col. Stephen G. Abel with a \$20,000 donation for work on the New Jersey World War II Memorial on State Street in Trenton. Photo by Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA.



CADETS HONOR WARRIORS

Civil Air Patrol Cadets Jose Avila (l), Jimmy Stewart Composite Squadron and Emily Speziale (r), Pineland Composite Squadron, place a wreath on the grave of Maj. Francis Burke, the only Medal of Honor recipient buried at the Brig. Gen William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery as part of the Wreaths Across America event on Dec. 13, 2008. Cadets placed more than 100 wreaths at the state cemetery, one of a half dozen New Jersey wreath events that were synchronized with the Arlington National Cemetery wreath-laying ceremony. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kryn P. Westhoven, JFHQ-NJ/PA.



SCOUT'S GOOD DEEDS

To complete requirements for Eagle Scout Edward Gorman Jr. of Avenel developed his project to provide a recreation opportunity for the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home residents. Gorman looks over the instructions to install the six-hole putting green, which was designed by www.backyard-golf.com, that fellow Boy Scouts and adult leaders assisted in constructing in the back of the home near the amphitheater. Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.

BIRTHDAY KISSES

Paramus Veterans Memorial Home resident John Lemenmeier gets special treatment from the Liberty Belles when he celebrated his 100th birthday on Feb. 20. During the ceremony he was presented with the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal. In addition to the staff and residents who attended the birthday bash, Lemenmeier was joined by more than 30 members of his family. Lemenmeier was born in Austria in 1909. His family moved to the United States and Union City in 1912. Lemenmeier served in the Army during World War II and saw combat service in both North Africa and Italy. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.



Vets Haven eligible for tax refund contributions

By Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

Every day William McGinnis makes an effort to help service members and veterans. Every day he honors the memory of his son, Marine Sergeant Brian D. McGinnis, who was killed on March 30, 2003, in a UH-1N Huey helicopter crash in Southern Iraq.

McGinnis's efforts appear in black and white in the pages of the New Jersey state income tax booklet on page 7 with the listing for Veterans Haven Support Fund as a new N.J. Charitable Fund. This allows taxpayers the option to donate all or part of their income tax refund to this worthy cause.

"Instead of feeling sorry, I was trying to help wounded Soldiers," said McGinnis. While visiting service members at Walter Reed Army Hospital, the Woodbury Heights resident got the idea of creating a contribution check off box on tax forms for support of wounded warriors.

He started talking to federal and state legislators. His local State Senator Stephen Sweeney mentioned Veterans Haven and how the transitional housing program was successful in getting homeless veterans back into society.

"I thought it was a very worthwhile facility," added McGinnis who toured the 55-bed facility in Winslow Township before getting behind the effort to start the New Jersey Veterans Haven Support Fund. It was a two-year process that in January 2008 made its way to governor's desk for a signature.

The Veterans Haven check off will help veterans re-

ceive added necessities to help get a job or move out on their own at the end of the two-year program. Since 1995, more than 800 veterans have entered the doors of the facility after being evaluated at a VA Medical Center. Eligible veterans must agree to a long term commitment focusing on psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation in a drug and alcohol free environment.

While there is an estimated homeless veteran's population of 7,000 to 8,000 in New Jersey, the Veterans Haven program is looking to touch more lives with a proposed 39-bed addition. With potential of more veterans involved in the program, there will even be a greater need to support the reintegration of the homeless vets back into society as productive citizens.

While this tax check off box is just a small step for New Jersey taxpayers to support former service members, McGinnis is still looking to get a similar check off on federal tax forms in the future.

He is not put off by how long it takes to get legislation moved through government. He's already enjoyed success at the local level and on the Internet, where he launched efforts to keep military families in touch with loved ones, ringing up \$1.6 million in donated phone cards for deployed troops. McGinnis hopes that the tax return contribution will answer some of the needs of homeless veterans in the state.



GENERAL CELEBRATES WITH RESIDENTS

Lt. Gen. Raymond E. Johns Jr. (left) visited the residents of the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home at the annual Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 10, 2008. Johns, a native of Bergen County, currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. Photo by Sgt. Edward Smith, 444MPAD.



COLUMBARIUM CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Construction workers take advantage of the good weather at the Section P Columbarium and Public Assembly Area at the Brig. Gen William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery, which is slated to be dedicated this upcoming Memorial Day. Photo by Gregory S. Fowler, LA Group, P.C.

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For information on your veterans entitlements call toll-free
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www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/index.html

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