

DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



FEBRUARY 16, 2011



Soldier in need receives a helping hand

Senior NCO steps up to assist fellow soldier, friend

By: Sgt. Bill Addison, 444th MPAD

It's been a rough few years for Sgt. Michael Suplee, a network support technician at Joint Force Headquarters.

A cancer survivor with mounting medical bills, Suplee has been struggling to support his family - a wife suffering from Lupus and a young daughter.

His main vehicle, a 1993 Ford Thunderbird, had fallen into such poor condition that it was no longer safe to drive from his hometown of Maple Shade, N.J. to his job at Joint Force Headquarters in Fort Dix.

Suplee was praying for a miracle.

Little did he know, just down the hall Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Vazquez, information technology specialist for JFHQ, was working to make those prayers come true.

Vazquez had seen the condition of Suplee's vehicle a few weeks prior, and was concerned for his safety.

"I remember walking into the office and saying I think somebody abandoned a car in the back," Vazquez said.

It was Suplee's first week working in the communication shop, and he and Vazquez talked about the car, and they quickly bonded over Suplee's story.

Vazquez felt a connection with the younger soldier and wanted to help.

"I was feeling his pain," said Vazquez. "I went through that. My first wife passed away in 2008 from cancer."

Recently remarried, Vazquez and his wife Maria, a family readiness support assistant for the 57th Troop Command, wrote to the Advanced Auto Parts Makeover Contest on behalf of Suplee.

Vazquez, a Browns Mills resident, used his prior experience as a mechanic to detail everything the Thunderbird required in the

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Sgt. Michael Suplee, a network support technician at Joint Force Headquarters, examines the engine of his 1993 Ford Thunderbird. Suplee, a cancer survivor, recently had his vehicle repaired free-of-charge by a local auto shop through the Advanced Auto Parts Makeover Contest, which he was awarded after a fellow soldier nominated him. The vehicle was in such poor condition that it made it unsafe for Suplee to drive back and forth to work. (Photo by: Spc. Robert Neill, JFHQ / PAO)



Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Vazquez and Sgt. Michael Suplee inspect the engine of Suplee's 1993 Ford Thunderbird. Vazquez, an information technology specialist at Joint Force Headquarters, nominated Suplee, a network support technician also at JFHQ, to the Advanced Auto Parts Makeover Contest. Suplee, a cancer survivor, received more than \$3,000 worth of repairs on his vehicle, which now allows him to safely travel back and forth to work. (Photo by: Spc. Robert Neill, JFHQ / PAO)

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essay, as well as outlining Suplee's struggles over the past few years.

In all, he estimated Suplee's vehicle needed approximately \$3,000 in repairs.

It wasn't long after that, that Suplee was notified he was one of the 10 winners of the contest.

According to a release from Advanced Auto Parts; the company recognized Suplee as a dedicated husband, father, veteran and cancer survivor whose family vehicle was badly in need of service to return it to safe driving conditions.

"We are so happy to be able to recognize Michael and his family and we hope that this car makeover helps ease the burden and improves their daily lives," said Morgan Schafer, Regional VP for Advanced Auto Parts.

"I'm humbled that somebody would go that distance for me. To know that somebody's out there looking out for other people, I'm very appreciative," said Suplee.

Advance Auto Parts commercial accounts manager, Kevin McClain, then made arrangements for the repair work to be performed at a BP station in Delanco, N.J.

Now repaired, Suplee said the car runs better than it ever has, and he's certain the owner of the repair shop, Jim Loringers, put in

more than the \$3,000 worth of work allocated for the winner.

"He must have put about \$4,000 to \$5,000 worth of repairs into it," Suplee said. "I was extremely ecstatic. I had no idea how we were going to get that car fixed."

And while Suplee is thankful to the men and women of Advanced Auto Parts and Jim Loringers for the work he put into his car, he is exceptionally grateful to the man who made it all happen.

"I would definitely say Sergeant Vazquez is a special guy," said Suplee. "I would also say that being in the Guard plays a lot into it as well. We learn leadership traits and to look after each other like brothers and sisters in uniform."

And the Vazquez family wasn't quite finished in their efforts to help Suplee and his family.

In December, Suplee was notified that his family would be the beneficiary of the proceeds from the 7th annual 2011 Sgt Nutter Run being held at the National Guard Training Center, Sea Girt, N.J. on May 15.

Once again it was Vazquez and his wife who nominated him.

"I've been praying and it seems like doors are opening up," said Suplee. "This was a complete shock to me and it's a great honor to be associated with the Nutter Run."

"I can only imagine the stress he's under, with bills, and keeping food on the table and his wife's medical problems," said Vazquez. "It feels good to help. That's what we're here for- to take care of each other."

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Veterans Outreach Schedule

March 1-3

at the Jersey Gardens Mall
651 Kapowski Road, Elizabeth, NJ 07201
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
Medal Ceremony at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 1
Kiosk hours 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

April 7

at New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home
524 North West Boulevard, Vineland, NJ 08360
Medal ceremony only in Auditorium starting at 1:30 p.m.

Retirement made easy

Looking to add certainty to an uncertain future? Then you are in luck.

The Division of Pensions and Benefits has created a presentation called "Retirement Made Easy". This presentation is provided on their website and it is an overview of the planning and application process for retirement from the Public Employees' Retirement System or the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund.

The presentation is hosted by GoToMeeting® and requires an Internet connected PC with Windows® 7, Vista, XP or 2000; or a Mac with OS® X v10.4 (Tiger®) or newer, as well as a web browser of Internet Explorer® 6.0 or newer; Mozilla® Firefox® 3.0 or newer; or Safari™ 3.0 or newer. Also, you will need speakers for the VoIP audio part of the presentation.

Note: The recorded presentation is a summary of the benefits available to most PERS and TPAF members. Specific benefits may vary based on a member's individual circumstances.

To find forms, publications and useful links referenced in the presentation, go to:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/retirement-made-easy-links.shtml>

To view the Retirement Made Easy Presentation, click on the link below and enter your email address and complete your registration.

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/405050984>

Tickets to Blue Man Group show

The Soldiers', Sailors', Marines', Coast Guard & Airmen's Club, Inc. has complimentary tickets available for the Blue Man Group theatrical show on Friday, Feb. 18 at Astor Place Theatre in New York City.

Blue Man Group is best known for its widely popular theatrical shows and concerts that combine music, comedy and multimedia theatrics to produce a totally unique form of entertainment. The blissful party atmosphere created at the live events has become the trademark of a Blue Man Group experience.

The theater is located at 434 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y.

For more information and reservations, please call Hazel at 212-683-4353.

Indoor climbing outing in Brooklyn

The USCG Sector NY MWR is running an indoor climbing event on March 2 for anyone interested in some fun activity at Brooklyn Boulders.

Departure will be from the base, which is located at Fort Wadsworth, N.Y., at 3 p.m. for about two hours of indoor climbing at Brooklyn Boulders.

The price per person is \$16, which includes shoes, harness, and chalk bag rentals.

Registration for this event will end on Feb. 24.

For further information, please contact Karryl Tolle by phone at 718-354-4407 or via Email at d01mwrsecny@uscg.mil.

NJVVMF discussion event

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation invites you to a discussion on "My Lai Massacre" with Professor Louise Barnett of Rutgers University on Saturday, March 12 at 1 p.m. at the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, Holmdel, N.J.

Admission is free for veterans and active-duty military personnel, as well as for children under 10. Adult admission is \$5; student and senior citizens is \$3.

If interested in attending this event, please R.S.V.P to 732-335-0033.

Division of Pensions & Benefits supports "America Saves Week"

It's no secret that this tough economy has Americans struggling to cope financially. That's why now is a critical time to reduce debt and save money for the future. And the ideal time to start is during America Saves Week, which runs from Feb. 20 to Feb. 27.

Spearheaded by the American Savings Education Council, America Saves Week is a nationwide event in which individuals are encouraged to take action to begin saving or to save more efficiently.

Similar to National Save for Retirement Week, this event is a great opportunity for state employees to learn more about positive financial habits.

If your New Jersey State Employees Deferred Compensation Plan (NJSEDCP) education consultant has not yet contacted you regarding this event, please reach out to your consultant to obtain materials and schedule seminars at your location.

Region	Education Consultant	Cell Phone	Email address
North Jersey	Rocco Attanasio	609-571-5532	rocco.attanasio@prudential.com
Statehouse/Mercer County	Michael McConnell	609-334-5202	michael.mcconnell@prudential.com
Central Jersey	Susan McAleavey	609-472-1634	susan.mcaleavey@prudential.com
South Jersey	Patricia Scherer	609-462-1239	patricia.scherer@prudential.com



The Duke Ellington Legacy Band played at New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park on Tuesday, Feb. 15. in commemoration of Black History Month.

Award program extended to military spouses' employers

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) has announced an expansion of the Patriot Award Program to include employers of spouses from Guard and Reserve service members. The Patriot Award was previously presented only to employers of Guard and Reserve service members. After learning of the growing number of employers adopting supportive initiatives for military spouses, ESGR embraced the opportunity to recognize these employers with their own Department of Defense award.

The employer of a military spouse has no legal obligation to provide unique support, but Guard and Reserve spouses often share the challenges of military service. Child-care, managing the household, and work schedules often have to be adjusted when one spouse leaves to serve our country. Military spouses value the cooperation and encouragement of their employers just as much as those in the Guard and Reserve. The expansion of the Patriot Award honors these patriotic employers and is the only Department of Defense award designated for spouses' employers.

The nation has relied heavily on Guard and Reserve service members since entering continuous operations nearly 10 years ago. These service members have deployed and fought side-by-side with active duty members, and each time leaving a spouse

behind to do the work of two. Unlike their counterparts on active duty, Guard and Reserve spouses' may not live near the supportive network of large military bases. In many cases, an employer is a Guard and Reserve spouse's strongest support community.

Guard and Reserve spouses are already coming forward to share how their employers have gone above and beyond in their support. For one spouse, her supervisor shifted her nursing schedule when her husband deployed to allow the mother of



three to continue working, but also to be at home for their children during the school year. When babysitter options became too difficult to coordinate, she was granted a leave of absence with no questions asked.

Robyn Gellerup, a Wisconsin mother of three, works as an office manager for a construction company showroom.

"While my husband was deployed both times, Rod and Becky Cook have taken care of us like we are part of their family; from mowing our lawn, plowing snow from our

driveway, to performing maintenance on our vehicles and home," said Gellerup. "It gave my husband peace of mind knowing that if something goes wrong I could just pick up the phone and they'd be there."

All spouses of Guard and Reserve members are eligible to nominate their employers. Spouses can log on to www.esgr.org/PA to fill out the *Spouse Nomination Form*. Each nominated supervisor will receive a Department of Defense Certificate of Appreciation, presented by the spouse employee or the local volunteer from the ESGR State Committee.

About ESGR

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce. For more information about ESGR Outreach Programs, or ESGR volunteer opportunities, please call 1-800-336-4590 or visit www.ESGR.mil.



THE RSP Team accepting NGB's Accreditation Certificate and Streamer for Excellence.

NJ RSP passes accreditation

By: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert A. Barea, Recruiting and Retention Battalion

Sea Girt, N.J. – On Feb. 10 the Recruit Sustainment Program for the New Jersey Army National Guard passed an intense accreditation process to ensure the program is in compliance with National Guard Bureau's guidance. The accreditation consisted of nine sections ranging from training, logistics, administration and human resources. The inspectors were subject matter experts from National Guard Bureau and were accompanied by the RRAC II contractor supervisor. Of all these sections, NJ RSP received 100 percent satisfactory and passed with flying colors. The success of this accreditation is a testament to the dedication and commitment to excellence of the non-commissioned officers of the program, as well as command emphasis.

The RSP fulfills a vital mission of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion. The program is responsible for the integration, acclimation and training of all initial entry Soldiers and prepares these warriors mentally, physically, and administratively for initial active duty training. This is a daunting task but NGB has spent much time and resources in developing a training curriculum for the warriors as well as the cadre who trains them. For this reason, NGB has instituted an accreditation program, the first of its kind in the recruiting and retention arena, to ensure that the entire country is to standard. Because of this program, New Jersey, as well as other states, is not only in compliance with these standards, but also excelling in overall operations.

Proof of this fact is New Jersey's ascension from being ranked No. 43 in the nation at the beginning of fiscal year 2010 to No. 9, and No. 3 for medium sized states, at the end of the fiscal year.

The New Jersey RSP continued its success by remaining in the top 10 for the entire first quarter of fiscal year 2011. The ranking system is based upon the following statistics; training seat management; negative end strength; drill attendance and overall training pipeline losses.

For those who are interested in becoming cadre for this program, please contact Master Sgt. Garcia at 732-974-5938.

NJARNG hosts OCS orientation for potential candidates

By: 1st Lt. Vincent Solomano, historian and curator of the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

SEA GIRT, N.J. - The New Jersey Army National Guard's 254th Regional Training Institute hosted an orientation day for soldiers and civilians interested in attending the Officer Candidate School's (OCS) Class 55 here on Saturday, Feb. 5.

More than 90 prospective candidates attended briefings and heard from senior leaders about the importance of becoming a commissioned officer.

Addressing the orientation, Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General, applauded the prospective candidates for their initiative and interest.

Reminding them of the rigors of OCS, Rieth stated, "If you have the passion and you want to lead, you are in the right program."

He praised the service of those currently wearing the uniform and reminded the audience of New Jersey soldiers serving worldwide.

"Wherever there has been a need, you can find a New Jersey Guardsman," said Rieth.

The Adjutant General was joined by Brig. Gen. James J. Grant, director of Joint Staff at N.J. Joint Force Headquarters; Col. Walter Alvarado, commander of the 254th Regiment; and Maj. Patrick M. Cramer, commander of E Company and officer in charge of the OCS program.

On hand to welcome the prospective candidates were soldiers already engaged in the OCS program.

Officer Candidate Christopher Burns of Highland Lakes, N.J., is a member of Class 54. He praised the program as an "eye-opening, positive welcome to the military."

New Jersey's 254th Regional Training Institute is home to the northeast region's largest OCS program. Successful applicants to the Class of 55 will graduate in the summer of 2012. The last five NJARNG officers promoted to the rank of Brigadier General were graduates of the institute's OCS program.



Lt. Col. Timothy Coakley and Lt. Col. William Morris received their new rank at a ceremony at Joint Forces Headquarters on Feb. 12. Coakley, of Jackson, works full-time for the New Jersey Army National Guard as Deputy Personnel Director; and Morris, of Burlington, works full-time for the New Jersey Army National Guard as Assistant Chief of Staff. (Photo by Spc. Robert Neill, JFHQ/PAO)



Vineland Veterans Memorial Home resident Norm Baker, right, indicates on the Outspoken Library Kiosk the service where he downloads books to, left right, Adam Szczepaniak, director of the New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center; Gary Cooper, media Specialist, New Jersey State Library and Joe Romano, chief executive officer, Vineland Veterans Memorial Home. The kiosk, which was installed by the New Jersey State Library at the Home to serve the needs of the visually impaired veteran population in south Jersey, was unveiled on Feb. 15. Vineland is the first, of the state's three veterans' homes to receive the kiosk. The Outspoken Library Kiosk provides web based access to the New Jersey State Library. Veterans will have access to Audio Vision, a twenty-four hour newspaper reading service; National Federation of the Blind Newsline; the NJSL Talking Book

and Braille Center and the Library of Congress Braille and Audio Reading and Downloading Web Site providing access to more than 80,000 digital books and magazines. The kiosk allows users to download books and then upload them to a thumb drive to be played on players provided by the NJSL. Individuals with a visual deficit, a physical handicap, or learning disability qualify to receive this service free of charge. Under a federal grant, the NJSL was given 42 of these kiosks and has placed 20 of them at libraries across the state, as well as one at the Lyons Veterans Affairs hospital to service the needs of veterans in the northern part of the state and now the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home to service south Jersey. (Photo by Mark C. Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.)

Polar Fest 2011 is Right Around the Corner

Do you enjoy the snow and skiing, and saving money? Then register early for the Polar Fest 2011 scheduled on Feb. 26 at West Point Ski.

The West Point MWR is now taking early registration through Feb. 25 for the Polar Fest 2011, held each year at West Point, N.Y.

This is a great event for everyone - young service members, retired members, families, and everyone in-between. All MWR patrons are invited. Entry ticket prices are for individuals or families, but it does not include lift tickets or rentals.

Pre-registration prices are \$7 per person or \$20 per family, up to five people. Add \$5 per additional family member.

Day-of-event prices are \$8 per person or \$26 per family, up to five people. Add \$5 per additional family member.

For more information about this event, contact Courtney, acting Special Events Coordinator and BOSS advisor at 845-938-6497 or visit the West Point MWR website at www.westpointmwr.com.