

# DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



JANUARY 27, 2011

## Airman marches, low-crawls and sweats her way into history: Part one

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria  
9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force - Iraq Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD** -- A New Jersey Air National Guard member was the first female Airman to ever complete the U.S. Army's 18-hour Spur Ride.

Senior Airman Courtney Beard joined the "Order of the Spur" after completing a series of physical and mental tests held by the III Corps, Task Force Phantom, on Victory Base Complex, Iraq.

"There were countless people who dropped out but I made it through all 18 hours," said Airman Beard, an intelligence analyst with the 467th Expeditionary Intelligence Squadron here. "This is an accomplishment that I will remember for many years to come."

The "Order of the Spur" is a Cavalry tradition within the Army but the order is open to any Service member that serves with U.S. Cavalry units. Upon successful completion of the Spur Ride, new spur holders are welcomed with a formal induction ceremony.

In addition to the Spur Ride certificate, Airmen Beard was also presented a III Corps belt buckle by U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy P. Livengood, III Corps Special Troops Battalion.

"Airman Beard embodied the warrior spirit and displayed the drive and desire to not only push her teammates but also had the resolve to continue at a point where she believed she had no

more to give herself," said 1st Sgt. Brian McCutcheon, United States Forces - Iraq, A Company first sergeant.

Airmen Beard's hard work and dedication to completing a task come as no surprise to her current supervisor.

"She showed that the Air Force is well beyond the days of just riding a bike and that we are training just like our brother and sister services," said Tech. Sgt. Natasha Carman, Full Motion Video Operations NCO in charge for United States Forces - Iraq's Collection, Management and Dissemination team. "Airman Beard dominated the Spur Ride, representing the Air Force well and proving that we are fit-to-fight."

**It all began...** Shortly after her arrival on Camp Slayer from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., Airman Beard was sight-seeing around the base with a few of her co-workers.

As they drove past the Flintstone Palace, she noticed a group of Soldiers marching with rucksacks on their backs. They were in the midst of a Spur Ride and it grabbed the young Airman's attention. She instantly made it a goal of hers and announced it to everyone in the vehicle.

"I'm going to do the Spur Ride before I leave Iraq," Airman Beard said.

Her statement was met with laughter and disbelief. Com-



Senior Airman Courtney Beard, 467th Expeditionary Intelligence Squadron intelligence analyst, poses for a photo with her spurs and III Corps belt buckle Jan. 16, 2010, on Camp Slayer, Iraq. The Brooklyn, N.Y., native was the first female Airman to complete the 18-hour Spur Ride, a series of mental and physical tests, held by the III Corps, Task Force Phantom. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria)

ments like 'that's why you're in the Air Force' and 'you're going to spend your days sitting at a desk instead' were made but fell on deaf ears because Airman Beard had already made her decision.

"They surely didn't stop me from doing what my stubborn mind had already set its self to do," she said. "I am definitely the type of person that sets her mind on accomplishing a goal and doesn't stop until that goal is 100 percent complete."

Her thoughts quickly switched to how she would prepare for the Spur Ride. Vigorous exercise? Marching?

"I thought of various ways to prepare but, the answer was, there is no way to truly prepare for something like the Spur

Ride," Airman Beard said.

Airman Beard spent the day and night before stressing out about the big day. She double and triple checked all of her gear to make sure she had everything. She even laid out her uniform, glasses and breakfast, consisting of Gatorade, power bar and banana.

"I was nervous beyond belief, but it felt comforting to have complete control of at least the beginning portion of the Spur Ride," she said.

**Editor's Note:** This is part one of a three part series about Airman Beard and her Spur Ride experience.

## Free Battleship New Jersey tours For all Vets

The Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial is providing to all veterans a free Fire Power, City at Sea or General Quarters Audio Tour of the Battleship.

Guided tours are subject to the availability of volunteer museum guides.

It is their way of giving back to all veterans who gave their time to serve our nation, and to thank the state for continuing to support the nation's most decorated battleship.

The Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial is located at the Camden Waterfront, 62 Battleship Place, Camden, N.J.

For more information, visit the Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial Web site at [www.battleshipnewjersey.org](http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org), or call Mr. Jack Willard at 856-966-1652 ext. 144.

## Have fun at Polar Fest this winter

With more snow coming, it's time to start planning for 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.

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](http://www.westpointmwr.com).



*This was the scene in the parking lot of DMAVA's Lawrenceville Campus hours before business officially opened on Thursday. Armorers worked through the night to keep the areas around the critical facilities clear of snow – as they've done for every storm in this record-setting winter. Photo by Sgt. Wayne Woolley, DMAVA/PA..*



*New Jersey Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve state Chairman Carmen Venticinque, left, presents a Seven Seal award to the Air Guard with Lt. Col. Wayne McCaughey, Chief of Staff and Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Francis accepting at the first ever Seven Seal Brunch held at Joint Base MDL on January 22. Senior leaders of all seven Guard and Reserve branches attended the event to learn more on how ESGR can support their component uniform service members and their families. (Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, ESGR-NJ Public Affairs Co-Director)*

## Retirement made easy

The state 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 OSX v10.4 (Tiger®) or newer; and Internet Explorer 6.0 or newer, Mozilla Firefox 3.0 or newer or Safari 3.0 or newer, and speakers for VoIP audio.

**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 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>

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>

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### New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth – The Adjutant General  
Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff  
Raymond Zawacki – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer  
Air Force Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez - Public Affairs Specialist  
Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist



The Iraq Campaign Streamer is added to the 2/113 Infantry Battalion's guidon on Jan. 22 by right, Lt. Col. Mark Pieterski, center, Lt. Col. Paul Nema and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Andrzej Ropel.

## State employee retirement news

Attention DMAVA state employees: Mike McConnell, Retirement Consultant, of Prudential Retirement who administers the New Jersey State Deferred Compensation plan will be here on Monday Jan. 31, starting at 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., for 30-minute individual meetings.

To assist you in planning for this coming year we have pre-arranged specific meeting dates for the Prudential representative. They are: May 30, Aug. 29 and Oct. 31.

Please contact: Paul Serdiuk, Human Resources, to reserve a place.

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## Discounted tickets for play

The George Street Playhouse is providing discounted tickets to all Veterans for their upcoming production of "The Subject Was Roses."

The play is a Pulitzer prize-winning family drama about a young World War II veteran's homecoming and his complex relationship with his parents – particularly his father – as he makes the transition back to life at home.

The play will run from Feb. 8 through March 6 at the George Street Playhouse located at 9 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, N.J.

Tickets may be purchased online by visiting [www.GSPonline.org](http://www.GSPonline.org) or by phone by calling 732-846-2895 ext. 134 or 155. Use code: VETERAN to receive \$8 off each ticket.

For more information contact Kelly Ryman, director of marketing and public relations, at 732-846-2895 ext. 131 or via email at [kryman@georgestplayhouse.org](mailto:kryman@georgestplayhouse.org).

## Celebrating Black History Month



An original painting by artist Peter Culos of Point Pleasant, N.J., depicting the 22nd United States Colored Infantry, a unit composed mainly of black New Jerseyans, at Petersburg, VA in June 1864. The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey will open from Feb. 1 until Feb. 24 a Black History Month exhibit at the National Guard Militia Museum in Sea Girt, N.J. celebrating the service of New Jersey's African-American soldiers, Marines, sailors, and Airmen. (Illustration provided by Joel Bilby, assistant curator for NGMMNJ.)

## Veterans Outreach Schedule

February 8-10

**Quaker Bridge Mall**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Medal Ceremony at 10:30a.m. on Tuesday, February 8 – Kiosk hours 10:00a.m. – 8:00p.m. daily

150 Quaker Bridge Mall, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

March 1-3

**Jersey Gardens Mall**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Medal Ceremony at 10:30a.m. on Tuesday, March 1 – Kiosk hours 10:00a.m. – 8:00p.m. daily

651 Kapowski Road, Elizabeth, NJ 07201

April 7

**New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland**

Medal Ceremony only in Auditorium starting at 1:30p.m.  
524 North West Boulevard, Vineland, NJ 08360

## Chaplain runs marathon; not once but twice

**Story by: Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs**

Everyone has an epiphany once in a while. You can be at a baseball game watching your favorite team play, or you can be at a Broadway play. It doesn't matter where it happens, but somehow, someday you get that "eureka!" moment. And if the epiphany is significant enough, it may change your life.

For Capt. David A. Leung-Kahler, that moment came to him almost seven years ago, and he can now cross out 'running a marathon' from his bucket-list.

One night he was watching one of those Dateline shows and he saw an out-of-shape and overweight person running a marathon, said Leung-Kahler, 35, a chaplain with the 108th Wing out of Joint Base-McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

"If this person can do it, so can I," said Leung-Kahler.

He said he was out of shape and needed to lose some weight. So he went online and found a training regiment for a marathon and began training for the 2004 Philadelphia marathon.

His six-month training was difficult, he said. But the hardest part was just finding the time to get in the long runs and put in the daily effort.

"There are days when you don't want to do the runs," said Leung-Kahler.

But he found the time around his busy schedule as a pastor for the Griggstown Reformed Church at Princeton, N.J., and ran on a trail near his church.

His congregation saw him running just about every day, said Leung-Kahler, who resides in Hopewell.

And his wife, Pauline, told him she was glad he was doing the marathon because she wouldn't want to run it herself, he said.

So after six grueling months of training, he ran and completed the Philadelphia marathon in 4:34:24.

"It felt great and I was pleased," said Leung-Kahler.

Having accomplished his goal, he continued running three miles a day to stay in shape and be prepared for the Air Force's annual physical test.

"I was not planning to do another marathon," Leung-Kahler said.

But somehow he changed his mind and once again began the grueling training routine to run the 2010 U.S. Air Force Marathon in Dayton, Ohio scheduled on Sept. 18.

He didn't train as intensely as his first marathon, he said as his goal was just to finish the marathon.

But his biggest challenge was running the marathon with very little sleep and rest as he had just arrived home Friday Sept. 17, from the Wing's operational readiness exercise at the Combat Readiness Training Center, which is located at Alpena Air National Guard Base, Alpena, Mich.

"Right after we landed, I got into my car and drove straight through to Ohio," he said.

He didn't do as well as he had hope he would, but given the lack of sleep and little rest, he was still able to finish the marathon and pose for a victory photo at the finish line.

"In the Philadelphia marathon I was bent over with exhaustion



*Capt. David A. Leung-Kahler crosses the finish line at the U.S. Air Force marathon on Sept. 18, 2010 at Dayton, Ohio. Leung-Kahler, a chaplain with the 108th Wing based out of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., trained several months to run his second marathon. (Photo courtesy of Brightroom, Inc.)*

at the finish line when they took the photo," Leung-Kahler said. "This time I wanted to pose with my hands raised in the air, so I did."

So after a two-hour nap on the lawn of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, he gathered himself and began the eight hour drive back home.

"A lot of coffee and rest stops along the way," he said.

He said he is now running for recreational purposes and to stay in shape. But who knows, there is always a marathon somewhere that might be calling him.

And just maybe he might get another "eureka!" moment.

**Email your Highlights submissions to  
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