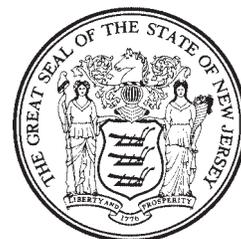




VETERAN JOURNAL



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Autumn 2002

New Veterans Nursing Home in Vineland

Story and photo by G. Natasha Zoe,
Veterans Information Officer

Governor James E. McGreevey turned the first shovel and led ground-breaking ceremonies Sept. 27 for the new Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland – a state-of-the-art 300-bed facility that will consist of 240 long-term care beds, a 32-bed special needs unit and a 28-bed assisted living unit.

Brig.Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General, and more than 500 veterans joined the Governor and Vineland Veterans Home residents mark the first phase in construction. The New Jersey Army National Guard's 63rd Army Band and the New Jersey Air National Guard Color Guard completed the pomp and pageantry of the morning.

The new Veterans Memorial Home's construction is financed through a partnership between New Jersey and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. New Jersey contributed approximately \$17 million with the VA (federal) funding the remaining 67 percent. The \$50.4 million project will be constructed in four phases thus allowing continued care of residents during the construction. The new home will be built on the same site as the current buildings. The first phase will begin immediately with the initial site work, including initial building demoli-



tion, ground clearing, installation of underground utilities and debris removal. The second phase, to begin around the first of the year, will be the home construction. Phase three will begin late fall of 2004, and includes moving residents into the new home and demolishing the remaining buildings. The last phase, spring of 2005, is the remaining site work and landscaping.

The new home was designed by Nadasky/Kopelson Architects. The project management firm is Gilbane Building Company, Inc. The four prime contractors are Torchio Brothers, Inc. (general construction), RC

Fabricators, Inc. (structural steel), Falasca Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, Inc. (plumbing and HVAC), and Scalfio Electric, Inc. (electric.)

The assisted living component will nationally be the first assisted living unit within a state veterans nursing home.

The new facility will provide for a full "continuum of care." Residents can begin in the assisted living unit and as their needs increase move to a more comprehensive care unit, within the same facility.

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Vineland

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The current Vineland Memorial Home has a 282-bed capacity.

“We have worked hard to plan the new facility, to ensure the best physical plan – a state-of-the-art facility – to address the needs and quality of life for our residents,” said Joe Romano, the chief executive officer, Vineland Veterans Memorial Home.

The new facility will be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, more esthetically pleasing, with improved patient care and staff efficiency, improve the resident quality of life by increasing individual living space and providing more privacy.

Current Vineland Memorial Home residents include veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm veterans. Eligibility for admission is based on financial and qualified medical needs of veterans who served on active or reserve duty and where honorably discharged; and veteran’s spouses and the spouses and parents of veterans killed in action during war. Spouses must be at least 50 and have been married to the veterans for 10 years or more.

Numerous volunteer organizations and individuals support the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home. These are the people who truly make this facility a “home for our veterans”. The American Legion donated a van to the Vineland Home last year. The VFW donated a handicapped accessible bus to the Vineland Home at their annual convention this year. The New Jersey Air National Guard 108th Air Refueling Wing has adopted the Vineland Memorial Home and residents of the Vineland Home recently attended the 108th’s family day at McGuire Air Force Base. Many other organizations that volunteer time and money on a continual basis are: Disabled Americans Veterans (DAV), Jewish War

Vets, the Masons, the Elks and the auxiliaries of all these groups.

The Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland is one of three veteran nursing homes operated by DMAVA. The residents receive around-the-clock medical and nursing care, rehabilitative and recreational services, special dietary service and other amenities.

“One of the most difficult decisions a family must make involves the realization that a family member requires the care that often only a nursing home can provide,” said Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs Col. Emil Philibosian. “Just as daunting is the determination of the most appropriate nursing home for the family member as regards standards and levels of care, cost and proximity. For New Jersey’s veterans, our state provides the best of care at our Veterans Memorial Homes, located conveniently in Paramus, Menlo Park and Vineland. Our veterans are urged to make application as early as possible in order to avail themselves of this remarkable resource.”

For more information on New Jersey’s Veterans Memorial Homes or for an application call 609-530-6766.



You can earn a degree Tuition Free In the New Jersey Army National Guard. To find out more call 1-800-Go Guard or visit www.1800GoGUARD.COM

Upcoming Event

Saturday, Dec. 14 at 1:00 p.m. at the Vietnam Era Educational Center in Holmdel, the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Foundation presents as part of its Author Lecture Series photographer and author Charlene Edwards discussing and exhibiting photography from her new book, “Voices from Vietnam: The Tragedies and Triumphs of Americans and Vietnamese – Two Peoples Forever Entwined by the Legacy of War.” Robin Moore, author of “The Green Berets” wrote the foreword to this collection of moving photographs and powerful personal narratives, including the words of General Westmoreland, Ambassador Le Van Bang, David Dellinger, Kim Phuc and many others.

The New Jersey Veteran Journal is an official publication of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for New Jersey's veterans, their families, friends, and concerned individuals and groups.

*James E. McGreevey
Governor*

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

*Col. Emil Philibosian
Deputy Commissioner for
Veterans Affairs*

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New Jersey's Medals



*Compiled by Staff Sgt. Barb Harbison
Public Affairs Specialist, NJDMAVA*

New Jersey residents who are combat veterans may apply for New Jersey's service medal(s).

The New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal, originally issued in 1858, New Jersey's highest military award, is given to combat veterans. State law requires the honoree be a current resident of New Jersey, have been a resident of New Jersey at the time of their enlistment into the military and received an honorable discharge from the military. Residents listed as prisoner of war or missing in action by the Department of Defense are eligible.

The DSM medal with a Silver Oak Leaf Cluster is awarded to veterans who received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal or equivalent.

Those current residents of New Jersey who served in combat but who were not residents of the state when they entered the military can apply for the New Jersey Meritorious Service Medal.

In 2000, the New Jersey Legislature created the New Jersey Vietnam Service Medal. It is given to current New Jersey residents with an honorable discharge or who are still serving in the military. They must have served in any branch of the armed forces of the United States in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos or Cambodia or the contiguous waters or air-space between Dec. 31, 1960 and May 7, 1975.

All of these medals can be awarded posthumously. The surviving spouse or immediate family member can apply for the medal.

To apply for any of these medals, send a copy of your DD Form 214 (Separation from Active Duty), along with your address and daytime phone number to: NJDMAVA, Attn: Medals, PO Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340.

For additional information call 609-530-6980.

Dear Veterans,

Thank you for your service to our State and Nation. Your courage and sacrifice on behalf of freedom and democracy have provided peace and prosperity to our great Nation and millions around the globe.

As the son of a Marine Corps Drill Instructor and as an individual named for my uncle who was awarded the

Navy Cross posthumously for extraordinary heroic action on Iwo Jima, I seriously recognize our moral and legal obligation to serve the members of our veteran community.

As Governor, I pledge my administration and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will work ceaselessly to demand the best for our veterans. We will accept nothing less.

With your continued support and with the assistance of Veterans organizations throughout the state, we are meeting that pledge. On September 27, we broke ground on the new \$50.4 million-dollar Vineland Memorial Home. In April, we began a \$6 million-dollar improvement project at the General Doyle Cemetery. Last month, I received the Nursing Shortage Task Force report and directed BG Glenn Rieth to implement the recommendations so that we can hire the nurses necessary to open the Old Glory Wing at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home.

Throughout my career, I have consistently been a strong and unwavering advocate for the brave men and women who have served and sacrificed for our Nation. I have challenged both Democratic and Republican administrations when they set forth proposals that would jeopardize our veterans. This year when the State confronted historic budget problems, I renewed my commitment and ensured that all State veterans services were fully funded and ensured the necessary State matching dollars to protect veterans programs.

Under the leadership of BG Rieth, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and my office are working aggressively to obtain Federal funding and provide State dollars to support veteran's benefits and program. We are working on these issues on a daily basis.

Lastly, I look forward to working with the Veterans Advisory Council, the commanders of our veterans' organizations and with each of you to improve the quality of life of veterans in New Jersey. Together we will make New Jersey the Veterans State. Thank you.

With all good wishes,
James E. McGreevey



New U.S. Law

PL107-135 Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001

Adds and expands existing health care programs for veterans by \$1.4 billion. Signed by President Bush January 23, 2002.

New U.S. Bills

*Compiled by G. Natasha Zoe,
Veterans Information Officer*

Summary as of October 15, 2002

HR811 Authorize construction projects to improve, renovate, and update patient care facilities at VA medical centers.

HR2561 Increase the rate of special pension for Medal of Honor recipients and make the pension effective from the date of the award and increase the criminal penalties associated with misuse or fraud relating to the Medal of Honor.

HR2792 Authorize the VA to make service dogs available to disabled veterans and to make various other improvements in VA health care benefits.

HR3240 Restore certain education benefits to individuals being ordered to active duty for Operation Enduring Freedom.

HR3423 Enact into law eligibility of certain Reservists and their dependents for burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

HR4015 Revise and improve employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans.

HR4085 Increase, effective as of December 1, 2002, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. **Presented to President October 11, 2002.**

HR4514 Authorize the VA to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating patient care facilities at VA medical centers.

HR4940 Enact into law requirements for burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

HR5055 Authorize the placement in Arlington National Cemetery of a memorial honoring the WWII veterans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

S62 Revise certain provisions for the appointment of professional psychologists in the Veterans Health Administration.

S129 Provide for the payment of a monthly stipend to the surviving parents (known as "Gold Star Parents") of servicemembers who die during a period of war.

New U.S. Bills

S131 Modify the annual determination of the rate of the basic benefit of active duty educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill.

S145 Increase to parity with other surviving spouses the basic annuity that is provided under the uniformed services Survivor Benefit Plan for surviving spouses who are at least 62 years of age.

S405 Improve outreach programs carried out by the VA to more fully inform veterans of benefits available to them.

S409 Clarify the standards for compensation for Persian Gulf veterans suffering from certain undiagnosed illnesses.

S456 Enhance the assurance of efficiency, quality, and patient satisfaction in the furnishing of VA health care to veterans.

S457 Establish Hepatitis C service-connection presumption for certain veterans.

S612 Require a VA annual plan developed and implemented for veterans outreach.

S662 Authorize the VA to furnish markers or headstones for marked graves or otherwise commemorate certain individuals.

S781 Extend the authority for housing loans for members of the Selected Reserve.

S912 Increase burial benefits for veterans.

S937 Permit the transfer of entitlement to the Montgomery GI Bill.

S984 Improve the VA's Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program.

S1013 Pay States plot allowances for veterans eligible for burial in a national cemetery who are buried in State cemeteries.

S1042 Improve benefits for Filipino veterans of WWII.

S1063 Improve the administration of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

S1089 Expand temporarily the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to facilitate staggered terms for judges on that court.

New U.S. Bills

S1090 Increase, effective December 1, 2001, the rates of compensation for service-connected disabilities and dependency and indemnity compensation.

S1091 Modify and extend the presumption of service-connection for herbicide-related disabilities of Vietnam era veterans.

S1093 Exclude certain income from annual income determinations for pension purposes, limit provision of benefits for fugitive and incarcerated veterans, increase the home loan guaranty amount, modify and enhance other veterans' benefits.

S1095 Restore promised GI Bill educational benefits to Vietnam era veterans.

S1113 Increase the Medal of Honor Roll special pension and provide an annual adjustment of that special pension.

How to Get a Copy of a U.S. Bill

[HTTP://THOMAS.LOC.GOV](http://thomas.loc.gov)

Using the U.S. Library of Congress website you may view any current U.S. bill or recent law. The website also lists addresses and phone numbers for U.S. Senators and Representatives.

The Legislative Resource Center will mail copies of U.S. bills. The phone number is 202-226-5200.

S1114 Increase the educational benefits for veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill.

S1160 Provide dog-guides to blind, hearing-impaired or spinal-cord injury veterans.

S1272 Assist veterans who were treated as slave laborers while held prisoners of war by Japan during WWII.

S1280 Authorize VA construction to renovate, improve, and update medical centers.

S1302 Pay gratuity to U.S. military and civilian employees who were slave labor for Japan during WWII, or surviving spouses.

S1408 Standardize income threshold for copayment for outpatient medications with that of inability to defray expense of care.

S1488 Authorize a cost-of-living adjustment in compensation for service-connected disabilities and dependency and indemnity, modify veterans home loan guaranty program.

S1517 Enhance the Montgomery GI Bill.

S1561 Strengthen the preparedness of VA health care providers and community hospitals to respond to bioterrorism.

New U.S. Bills

S1576 Extend eligibility for health care for veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War.

S1644 Further the protection and recognition of veterans' memorials.

S1648 Provide an increase in the maximum annual rates of pension payable to surviving spouses of veterans of a period of war.

S1656 Improve the processing of claims for veterans compensation and pension.

S1680 Amend the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 to cover National Guard mobilized for Operation Enduring Freedom or at the request of the President.

S1767 Provide that certain service in the American Field Service ambulance corps shall be considered active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the VA.

S1855 Enact into law eligibility for burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

S1905 Enhance veterans' programs and the ability of the VA to administer them.

S2025 Increase the rate of special pension for Medal of Honor recipients and make that pension effective from the date of the award, increase the criminal penalties for misuse or fraud relating to the Medal.

S2043 Extend by five years the VA provision of noninstitutional extended care services and required nursing home care.

S2044 Further improve and expand specialized mental health services to veterans.

S2074 Increase, effective December 1, 2002, compensation for service-connected disabilities and dependency and indemnity.

S2079 Facilitate and enhance judicial review of certain veteran's benefit matters.

S2132 Establish VA medical emergency preparedness centers and enhance VA medical research activities.

S2187 Authorize VA to furnish health care during major disaster or medical emergency.

S2205 Clarify disability compensation entitlement for women veterans with service-connected mastectomies and provide

New U.S. Bills

permanent authority for counseling and treatment for sexual trauma.

S2209 Provide an additional program of service disabled veterans' insurance.

S2228 Authorize the VA to operate up to 15 centers for mental illness research, education, and clinical activities.

New U.S. Bills

ment and other services to veterans; establish a new competitive grants program for employment services provided to veterans and servicemembers.

S2583 Require the VA to place certain low-income veterans in a higher health-care priority category.

Your Input & Opinion Matter - Get Involved

Have you read about a bill that interests you? Do you want it to become law? Or never become law?

You can make a difference! A registered voter has influence over their elected representatives.

Call, write or e-mail!

They welcome your input. They want you to be happy and re-elect them for another term. If you want to influence the legislative process, you must call or write your elected representatives. Only elected representatives can vote on a bill; not departments or agencies.

You as a registered voter can influence your representatives!

S2229 Authorize a cost-of-living increase for disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation and revise the requirement for maintaining levels of extended-care services to veterans.

S2230 Make permanent the VA authority to guarantee adjustable rate mortgages, to authorize the guarantee of hybrid adjustable rate mortgages.

S2231 Provide an incremental increase in amounts of educational assistance for survivors and dependents of veterans.

S2237 Modify and improve authorities relating to compensation and pension benefits, education benefits, housing benefits, and other benefits for veterans, to improve the administration of benefits for veterans.

S2561 Transfer from the Secretary of Labor to the VA certain provision of employ-

S2602 Provide that remarriage of the surviving spouse of a veteran after age 55 shall not result in termination of dependency and indemnity compensation.

S2630 Improve benefits for Filipino veterans of WWII and surviving spouses.

S2704 Disclose information on DoD projects, such as Project 112 and the Shipboard Hazard and Defense Project (Project SHAD), that included testing of biological or chemical agents involving potential exposure of servicemembers to toxic agents.

S2741 Improve determination of the inability of veterans to defray expenses of necessary medical care.

S2903 Provide for a guaranteed adequate level of funding for veterans health care.

S2987 Provide special compensation for former prisoners of war.

Legislative Process

A bill is introduced into the senate, assembly or house of representatives by a member of that house. The bill is then sent to committee(s) to determine its impact. If the bill leaves the committee, the full house votes on it. If it passes one house, the same process occurs in the other house. If it passes both houses it is sent to the chief executive office (president or governor) to be signed into law or vetoed. A veto can be overruled by a re-vote in both houses. Most bills never leave committee. An average of one in 300 bills become law.

Editor's note: Due to space constraints this list includes only the new laws and most all of the current bills (could be voted into law) that directly effect New Jersey veterans and/or their benefits.

It does not contain any resolutions (expressed opinions), private bills (that effect only one person or family) or veterans related bills that deal with states other than New Jersey.

New N.J. Bills

*Compiled by Elizabeth DiStefano,
Legislative Assistant, NJDMAVA*

Summary as of October 11, 2002

A100 Authorizes free admission to State parks and forests for disabled veterans.

A113 Provides reimbursement to municipalities for taxes lost due to totally disabled veterans' tax exemption.

A135 Authorizes free admission to State parks and forests and free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses for retired members of N.J. National Guard.

A201 Authorizes Bronze Star license plates.

A233 Creates interest free loan program for State residents who are members of National Guard and Reserves called to federal active duty.

A295 Supplemental appropriation of \$6 million to DHS for Social Services for the Homeless grant program and \$2 million to DMAVA to assist homeless veterans.

A310 Increases PERS veterans retirement benefits for active members and retirees.

A382 Broadens the criteria under certain circumstances, for eligibility for 100 percent exemption from property taxes for the surviving spouses of certain veterans.

A419 Makes supplemental appropriation of \$90,000 to the DMAVA for the Veterans' Oral History program to record veterans' account of war experiences.

A422 Modifies maximum age for police and fire department hires and for PFRS enrollment by subtraction from actual age of up to five years for Armed Forces, Coast Guard, reserves or National Guard service.

A458 Excludes from gross income under the gross income tax certain U.S. military compensation paid to reservists and National Guard members.

A526 Prohibits assignment of former military personnel to certain rating tiers under certain circumstances.

A627 Provides property tax exemption for fractional ownership by 100 percent disabled veteran in continuing care facility.

A648 Extends certain veterans' benefits to include veterans who served in NATO campaign and peacekeeping in Yugoslavia.

A697 (S1124) "Veterans' Property Tax Relief Act of 2000."

A703 Permits municipality to retroactively refund veteran's property tax paid inadvertently.

A737 (S1109) Authorizes certain TPAF veteran retirees paid health benefits under State Health Benefits Program.

New N.J. Bills

A744 Grants local government budget cap exception for personnel costs of employees in military reserves and N.J. National Guard activated for NATO action in Yugoslavia. (Passed Assembly, June 24, 2002)

A759 Appropriates \$50,000 to DMAVA for transportation pilot program to provide veterans' medical transportation.

A760 Authorizes special emblem for license plates of disabled veterans.

A787 Establishes loan program to rehabilitate military monuments; appropriates \$600,000.

A837 Excludes from gross income (tax) certain military compensation paid to N.J. National Guard members.

A838 Extends property tax reimbursement benefits to certain low income veterans.

A846 (S1160) Establishes special license plates for veterans of the Korean conflict.

A847 Amends definition of veteran for certain military engagements.

A 887 Broadens eligibility for certain veterans' benefits by eliminating service requirement of specified dates or locations.

A 980 Authorizes Distinguished Flying Cross license plates.

A 981 Authorizes Bronze Star license plates.

A 990 Extends veterans' property tax exemption to tenant shareholders in cooperatives and mutual housing corporations.

A1014 Allows gross income tax filters to designate contribution to VetGroup, Inc. for services to veterans.

A1015 Authorizes license plate for distinguished service medal recipients.

A1017 (S907) Requires State reimbursement to municipalities of cost of disabled veterans' total property tax exemption.

A1024 (S703) Authorizes free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and State park admission for certain military service.

A1025 Authorizes Naval combat service license plate.

A1031 Establishes and allocates funds for program to provide capital grants to veterans' organization; appropriates \$250,000.

A1038 Authorizes license plates for Disabled American Veterans Dept. of N.J.

A1046 (S1260) Provides employment credit for military service for Board of Education employees.

A1049 Appropriates \$25,000 to DMAVA for women veterans' memorial at the N.J. veterans' cemetery at Arneytown.

A1162 Directs New Jersey Highway Authority to designate Garden State Parkway as memorial highway to ex-POW's.

New N.J. Bills

A1175 Authorizes ex-POW license plate .

A1520 Entitles representatives of WAC's, WAVES, Women Marines and Vietnam Veterans of America to paid leave of absence to attend conventions.

A1550 Permits certain war-time veterans and military surviving spouses to receive enhanced homestead rebate amounts similar to rebate for the senior and disabled.

A1554 Excludes veterans' entitlements from determination of PAAD eligibility.

A1579 Excludes Armed Services combat zone pay from gross income taxation.

A1647 (S746) Allows veteran to claim eligibility to receive veteran's property tax deduction after October 1 of pretax year.

A1652 (S1284) Authorizes veteran license plates.

A1698 (S1269) Extends eligibility of property tax deduction and property tax exemption to certain service in Korean DMZ.

A1776 (S1125) Provides property tax relief to certain totally disabled veterans and municipal reimbursement by State.

A1922 Requires DMV to accept military retiree identification card as proof of legal name on driver's licenses.

A1932 Creates continuing education and nurse recruitment pilot program in DMAVA; appropriates \$348,000.

A1957 Permits municipalities to make retroactive veteran property tax deduction payments up to \$1,000 per veteran. (Passed Assembly, March 25, 2002)

A1998 Authorizes free State park admission and hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses for certain types of military service.

A2020 Allows for a gross income tax deduction for any honorable discharged member of the US Armed Forces, Reserve unit or National Guard.

A2060 Extends free admission to State parks and forests to disabled veterans and expands eligibility for free admission to State residents 60 years of age or older.

A2082 Exempts veterans' discharge certificate from N.J.'s open public records law.

A2084 (S1425) Extends certain benefits to veterans of Operation "Enduring Freedom" and members of reserve and State organized militia who serve at least 180 continuous days.

A2094 (S100) Extends eligibility for veterans property tax deduction to residents of continuing care retirement communities.

A2235 (S1150) Supplemental appropriation \$337,500 to DMAVA for veterans memorial cemetery personnel and equipment.

New N.J. Bills

A2270 (S1643) Authorizes prorating of veteran's property tax deduction.

A2316 (S303) Creates continuing education and nurse recruitment pilot program in DMAVA and provides funding to existing nurse education program in DHS; appropriates \$498,000.

New N.J. Bills

A2833 (S186) "Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Relief Act of 2001."

S81 Authorizes license plates for Disabled American Veterans Department of N.J.

S165 Makes supplemental appropriation of \$90,000 to the DMVA for the Veterans'

New N.J. Bills

S600 Eliminates criteria to receive military or civilian absentee ballot.

S644 Supplemental appropriation of \$6 million to DHS for Social Services to the Homeless grant program and \$2 million to DMAVA to assist homeless veterans.

S648 Supplemental appropriation of \$2 million to DMAVA for construction of the State WWII Veterans Memorial.

S709 Provide civil service preference to Operation Enduring Freedom veterans and to members of reserve and organized militia serving more than 180 continuous days.

S713 Amends definition of veteran for certain military engagements.

S724 Allows certain persons in active military service to receive stay of enforcement from certain obligations.

S747 Establishes and allocates funds for program to provide capital grants to veterans' organizations; appropriates \$250,000.

S752 Makes annual compensation paid to surviving spouses of certain blind or disabled veterans payable from date of veteran's death.

S806 Excludes from gross income under the gross income tax certain United States military compensation paid to members of units of the N.J. National Guard.

S836 Authorizes Naval combat service license plate.

S918 Establishes license plates for WWII veterans.

S1308 Provides that employees no longer must pay full cost of purchase of PERS, PFRS or TPAF credit for military service.

S1362 Allows gross income tax deduction for honorably discharged member of U.S. Armed Forces, Reserve or National Guard.

S1379 Provides for increase and annual adjustment in allowance paid to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities.

S1395 Extends certain benefits to veterans of Operation "Enduring Freedom."

S1563 Enhances certain TPAF and PERS retirement allowances for veterans.

S1631 Imposes penalty upon political subdivision of State that unlawfully denies military leave benefits.

S1728 Provides State-paid health care benefits coverage through SHBP for National Guard member called to State active duty for 30 days or more.

S1767 (A2875) Extends Distinguished Service Medal eligibility to 25-year residents.

S1852 Authorizes POW plates for vehicles leased by former prisoners of war.

How to Get a Copy of a NJ Bill

WWW.NJLEG.STATE.NJ.US

Using the New Jersey Legislative website you may view any current bill or recent law. The website also lists addresses and phone numbers for N.J. Senators and Assemblymen.

The Legislative Information and Bill Room will mail copies of N.J. bills. The phone number is 609-292-4840 or within N.J. 1-800-792-8630.

A2349 (S1455) Provides enhanced home-stead rebate for tenants who are disabled veterans equal to 18 percent of rent paid.

A 2354 (S328) Authorizes license plates for military retirees.

A2480 Provides for Special Purple Heart license plates.

A2489 (S 1769) Authorizes a 50th anniversary of ending of Korean War commemorative medal; appropriates \$5000.

A2490 (S1653) Provides income tax exclusion for portion of federal civil service pension representing foregone military pension benefit.

A2538 Provides special license plates for Purple Heart recipients.

A2663 (S1920) Extends certain veterans benefits to Operation "Enduring Freedom."

A2686 (S1884) Allows veteran to claim veterans' property tax deduction or disabled veterans' property tax exemption on spouse's property in certain circumstances.

A2702 Authorizes Adjutant General to issue service medal to commemorate 60th anniversary of ending of WWII; appropriates \$5,000.

A2816 Authorizes "Severely Disabled Veteran" license plates for qualified veterans; entitles handicapped parking privileges.

A2817 (S1937) Establishes grant program to rehabilitate veterans' organization posts; appropriates \$300,000.

Oral History program to record veterans account of war experiences.

S200 Appropriates \$25,000 to DMAVA for women veterans' memorial at the NJ veterans' cemetery at Arneystown.

S214 Extends veteran's property tax exemption to tenant shareholders in cooperatives and mutual housing corporations.

S226 Authorizes Bronze Star license plates.

S227 Authorizes Distinguished Flying Cross license plates. (Passed by the Senate, March 7, 2002)

S229 Authorizes special license plate for Distinguished Service Medal recipients. (Passed by the Senate, March 7, 2002)

S274 Provides paid post retirement medical benefits to certain retired veteran State employees.

S310 Broadens eligibility for certain veterans' benefits by eliminating service requirement of specified dates or locations.

S330 Adds Haiti peacekeeping mission to definition of "active service in time of war" for eligibility to receive \$50 veterans' property tax reduction.

S331 Excludes veterans' entitlements from income for determining PAAD eligibility.

S459 Excludes Armed Services combat zone pay from gross income taxation.

S493 Exempts from the sales and use tax sales made at concession stands located in State-owned veterans' homes.

New Jersey Veterans

Report from the Nursing Shortage Task Force

Compiled by NJDMAVA Staff

Shortly after the election, Governor-elect James E. McGreevey called for a Transition Team to review the N.J. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA). The team studied the professional healthcare worker shortages, most visible in the unopened Old Glory wing at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home.

After being sworn into office as The Adjutant General (TAG) of New Jersey, Brig.Gen. Glenn K. Rieth was personally confronted by the healthcare professional personnel shortage during a tour of the Menlo Park facility. He saw that the newly renovated Old Glory wing still remained empty. He was advised despite extraordinary efforts made to staff the wing, DMAVA was unsuccessful in its efforts to attract sufficient qualified registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and certified nurses aides.

The nursing shortage, not just in New Jersey but across the country, has assumed alarming proportion.

The TAG quickly undertook measures to charge Deputy Adjutant General, Col. Maria Morgan and Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs,

Col. Emil H. Philibosian, with organizing a Nursing Shortage Task Force. The task force, comprised of healthcare professionals, nurses, veteran organization representatives and DMAVA employees, was charged to find solutions and offer recommendations by Sept. 1. The task force investigated the cause of the nursing shortage and made both short- and long-term suggestions to eliminate the nursing shortage within DMAVA.

The task force found that the financial impact of the nursing shortage has been overwhelming to the three homes. They must rely on expensive temporary employment agencies to fill nursing gaps in nursing schedules.

There are also associated costs with respect to quality of life and the continued erosion of the nursing infrastructure. Nursing staff shortages have been directly linked to degradation in care resulting in both poor outcomes for patients, as well as a higher number of lawsuits. Additionally, there are regulatory issues and the risk of licensure violations.

The task force, after considering many possibilities, made the following recommendations as the most viable

actions needed to aggressively combat the nursing shortage:

(1) Develop an overall nursing recruitment strategy including a full-time nurse recruiter and nursing refresher courses.

(2) Provide incentives such as retention bonuses, increased salaries, scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and shift differentials.

(3) Make administrative changes to improve working conditions such as staff ratios, volunteer support, flexible scheduling and alternative work weeks.

(4) Implement a professional development strategy including mentoring and Magnet Award Designation.

.....

RNs, LPNs & CNAs

Immediate openings are available at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes and offer the following:

- Competitive Salaries*
- Great Health Benefits*
- Deferred Compensation Plan*
- Paid Vacation, Sick, and Personal Days*
- 13 Paid Holidays*
- Excellent Pension*

To apply, contact the Human Resources Division at 609-530-7038.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act will protect patient healthcare information

By Doris Neibart, Chief Executive Officer
New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was signed into law December 1996 but will become effective April 2003. This federal act protects confidential health information involving each area in the three New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes.

The act mandates a complete revamping of procedures guided by the writing of policies, designation of project managers, privacy officers, and constant training of staff.

Meredith Spano, assistant CEO, and Doris Neibart, CEO, both of the Veterans Home in Paramus, were assigned the duty of coordination, organizing and producing a system for the three New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes in order to initially get this massive program started.

Each home has been assigned responsibilities in writing policies based on requirements being approved by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The project is currently in its final stages of development. Each home will institute the changes independently.

Memorial Homes

Generous Support of Vets in Nursing Homes

Compiled by Staff Sgt. Barb Harbison, Public Affairs Specialist, NJDMAVA
Menlo Park Veterans Home thanks

Military Order of the Purple Hearts donated \$12,500 on January 2001 to the Snoozelen Room.

Union County Bowlers Association "Bowlers to Veterans" gave \$7,550 in July 2001 and July 2002 for residents' use.

American Legion Post 170 bestowed \$5,000 in July 2001 to the General Fund for Resident's Use.

Castellano Family Foundation presented \$9,000 in September 2001 for an electric wheelchair for resident.

Vineland Veterans Home thanks

American Legion Post 184 donated three \$3,000 defibrillators August 2002.



Veterans of Foreign Wars' state-wide project, a new \$53,000 handicapped-accessible bus, was donated in October 2002.

Paramus Veterans Home thanks

American Legion Post 170 presented \$75,000 in April 2001 for the All-Purpose room.

Endowment Fund for Military Veterans donated \$62,000 in October 2002 for a new bus.

Presidential Task Force Visits Menlo Home

*By Roman M. Martyniuk,
Public Affairs Officer, NJDMAVA*

On Wednesday, Sept. 4, Gail Wilensky, Ph.D., Co-Chair of a special Presidential Task Force to improve health care services to veterans was joined by Commission members Robert E. Wallace, Deputy Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and Josh Weston, chairman of ADP, and the Task Force's acting Executive Director Katherine S. Swartzel on an official visit to the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park.

The task force was established May 2001 to identify ways to improve the delivery of health care services to the nation's veterans. The visit to the

home was arranged at the request of Mr. Weston, a New Jersey native, who was interested in obtaining detailed information on the quality and level of care available through state-operated veteran healthcare facilities.

The task force toured the home with Menlo Chief Executive Officer Melvin J. Friedman, Ph.D. The Washington-based group also met with New Jersey's Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth; Col. Emil Philiposian, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs; Col. (ret.) Michael Smith, Joint Chief of Staff, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; and Jack McGreevey, a Marine Corps veteran, representing his son, Governor James E. McGreevey.

President greets Veterans



*Photo by Christine McNulty,
Volunteer Services,
Menlo Park Veterans
Memorial Home*
President
George W.

Bush (left) shakes hands and sign autographs for Paul Jeffries (center) and Joe Lynch (right) during his New Jersey visit. More than 30 residents and staff members from the Menlo Park, Paramus, and Vineland Veterans Memorial Homes meet President George W. Bush Sept. 23. The highlight of the presidential visit for New Jersey Veterans Home residents was being given front row seats.

"This was a great opportunity for the residents to be recognized by their Commander-in-Chief for their service to the country," stated Dr. Melvin Friedman, Chief Executive Officer, Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home. "The next day they were so excited about what had happened. I don't think there was a single person at Menlo who didn't know about their seeing the president."

The task force investigated a wide range of topics from pharmaceuticals to nursing shortages to "seamless" transition of care from active military service to veterans status as well as an extensive discussion on ways to better utilize the resources and services available through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly known as the Veterans Administration) and the United States Department of Defense medical facilities (available through the network of military bases and installations across the country.) The participants exchanged ideas and observations which would be included in the Task Force's final official report due to be presented to the President in March of 2003.

Veterans Haven

Stoy and photos by G.. Natasha Zoe,

Veterans Information Officer

The American Legion Auxiliary State President's state project for the past year (2001-2002) was to raise and donate \$17,000 to Veterans Haven for the purchase of new beds and mattresses for each of the 53 resident's rooms.

Robert Durante, superintendent of Veterans Haven, was invited to their annual convention in Wildwood to accept the donation. To the great surprise of Durante and other

guests attending the convention, the actual donation made by the American Legion Auxiliary was \$36,000.

This donation allows Veterans Haven to purchase better quality beds and mattresses than originally planned and an icemaker for the Haven's kitchen.

The American Legion Auxiliary donation is being combined with funds from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to purchase new beds,

mattresses, sheets, pillows, blankets, and bed spreads for each of the 53 resident's bedrooms.

This upgrade for all the bedrooms (total cost \$48,000) is the first stage of a complete bedroom enhancement. The final improvement will also include dressers, chests, nightstands, and lamps. The resident's rooms at Veterans Haven are currently furnished with mixture of donated used household furniture.

Delivery of the new beds, mattresses and linens is expected by the end of October.



Photo by Robert Sauselein, Fiscal Manager, Veterans Haven

Congressman Chris Smith visited Veterans Haven Sept. 9. He received an extensive overview of the history and current state of the program. The briefing included both Veterans Haven's resources, current funding and funding requirements and what congressional level help the program and the homeless veteran population could use. Congressman Smith discussed the possibilities of expansion of the program into other areas. He also toured the facility and met some of the residents.

Congressman Smith represents New Jersey's 4th Congressional District and is currently serving his 11th consecutive term in the House of Representatives. Smith serves as the Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. He was the prime sponsor for the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001, which nationally made more money available for homeless veterans programs and initiatives.



Help for Veterans Available at Port Murray Armory

Story and photo by G. Natasha Zoe,
Veterans Information Officer

One of the rooms of the Washington Armory is a place of honor, help and even some hugs. The two ladies who brighten the drab surroundings with their sunny smiles are Monica Banca and Lisa Szymanski.

Banca is a Veterans Service Officer and Szymanski is her assistant. Together they have helped more than 4,000 Warren and Hunterdon County veterans during the last 17 years. The Port Murray Armory office is one of 19 Veteran Service Offices operated by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The bulk of their work is assisting veterans with the maze of forms and paperwork involved in VA (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) Claims. They will fill out the forms, research medical records, and represent the veteran through the claim and any appeals.

Meeting with veterans in their Washington Armory office or in the veteran's home, the ladies complete about 20 claims a month with a better than 90 percent success rate. "My heart is in it, I'll fight for them to the bitter end," Banca said fiercely.

There are many benefits available to veterans from healthcare to pensions to burials.

Many veterans don't know about VA compensation pensions for Korean War veterans for cold weather injuries and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder); for Vietnam War veterans for diabetes, certain cancers and PTSD; and for World War II veterans for PTSD. For wartime veterans with annual income less than \$12,000, there is also a low-income pension.

"PTSD – in World War I it was called shell shock, and battle fatigue

in The Second War. It was ignored during Korea and referred to as PTSD after Vietnam," Szymanski described. "There is little to no counseling when leaving the military."



VSO Monica Banca helps veterans wade through benefit paperwork, slicing the red tape. From left to right is Larry Hardy, Monica Banca, Jim King and Nick Juliano.

"It is not just getting help, it is also the recognition of the problem," described Jim King, a Vietnam veteran of Blairstown. King originally met with Banca in 1998. "She put me in touch with someone who helped me. Now my life is back on track. [I live] in a positive manner not negative."

It is not just the veterans who suffer. "Our poor wives and children stuck with us through all the garbage," King said. "Now I don't fight with my wife."

"One of my earliest memories is of my father, a World War II vet' jumping out of a window yelling 'Geranimo!' PTSD becomes a whole family problem!" Banca said.

"Shouldn't we be able to stop fighting someday?" asks Larry Hardy, a Mountain Lake resident. Hardy has prostate cancer, diabetes and PTSD all a result of his service in Vietnam.

"Veterans do not know they are entitled to any benefits or which benefits and the whole process is confusing," described King. "They [Banca

and Szymanski] helped us though the process."

"Some veterans don't think they are entitled to anything because they were not in Vietnam and exposed to

Agent Orange," described Nick Juliano of Belvedere. Juliano was part of the SHAD Program and Operation Dominick [chemical and biological weapons vulnerability-testing program chemical warfare completed

on American service members by the U.S. government during the Vietnam War.] Juliano now has cancer of the tongue, throat and lungs.

The Shipboard Hazard and Defense program, according to the Department of Defense, was a subset of Project 112, a chemical and biological weapons vulnerability-testing program conducted by the Deseret Test Center from 1963 to 1969. The tests consisted of joint exercises involving the Army's Deseret Test Center, several Army and Navy vessels and Marine Corps and Air Force aircraft.

"Freedom is not cheap and democracy IS worth fighting for; these men are our heroes. We can never know the price they pay for our freedom," said Szymanski.

Monica Banca, the Veterans Service Officer, and Lisa Szymanski, her assistant, can be reached at 908-689-5840 or 689-5845. Their office is at 550 Route 57 (the Washington Armory) in Port Murray.

September 20 ~ POW/MIA Recognition Day

Recovery team returns from China with WWII remains

HICKAM AFB, Hawaii (Army News Service, Oct. 9, 2002) -- A 14-man search and recovery team from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory returned to Hawaii late last week with what is believed to be the remains of four American service members whose C-46 transport plane crashed in the Tibetan Himalayas of China in March 1944.

The aircraft was based at Sookerating, India, and was reported missing in flight enroute from Kunming, China, to its home base during WWII. It is believed the aircraft became lost, ran out of gas and crashed. The aircraft wreckage was located in a cliff face above a ravine.

The search and recovery team was in China for two months excavating the crash site located at about 15,600 feet above sea level.

The remains recovered from the initial crash site in China were transported to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii where they will be analyzed for identification potential.

U.S.-North Korea conclude POW/MIA Talks

(United States Department of Defense, Oct. 07, 2002) -- Talks between the United States and North Korea on issues related to accounting for American MIA ended Oct. 8 in Bangkok.

Led by Jerry D. Jennings, deputy assistant secretary of defense for

POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, the one-day session laid out the U.S. vision for improving U.S. remains recovery operations inside North Korea and facilitating live sighting investigations.

U.S. Military Will Leave No One Behind

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2002 — It is a matter of honor to the U.S. military that it will leave no one behind.

“Throughout the history of our nation, we have been blessed by heroes willing to sacrifice their freedom to protect and defend our own,” Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said at the Pentagon’s River Parade Field ceremony. “It is still so today. In foreign lands and on far away seas, courageous military men and women are fighting to defend our country’s freedom.

“They do so knowing that if they should fall on the field of battle, should they be captured or lost, we will do everything in our power to find them and to bring them home,” he continued. “That is our pledge to them and to you.”

Jennings spoke of past technical agreements, the result of which led to the recovery of the remains of more than 170 American soldiers in seven years. But he emphasized that progress is needed from the North Korean side to establish a mechanism for resolving reports of the possibility of Americans living or being held in North Korea.

Remains of U.S. Servicemen recovered in North Korea

(United States Department of Defense, Sept. 24, 2002) -- Remains believed to be those of eight American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War were repatriated Sept. 24.

Found near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, the five sets of remains are believed to be those of U.S. Army soldiers from the 7th Infantry Division who fought against Chinese forces November-December 1950.

Additionally, three sets of remains were found along the Kuryong River near the junction of Unsan and Kujang

counties, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang. The area was the site of battles between communist forces and the U.S. Army’s 1st Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions in November 1950. Approximately 1,000 Americans are

estimated to have been lost in battles of the Chosin campaign.

This repatriation marks the end of the second of this year’s three operations. The remaining operation is set for Sept. 28-Oct. 29.

Of the 88,000 Americans missing in action from all conflicts, more than 8,100 are from the Korean War.

DoD official cites progress on WWII

MIAS in Burma

(United States Department of Defense, Sept. 14, 2002) -- A Department of Defense delegation visited Rangoon, Burma, where it laid the framework for operations to recover the remains of WWII American servicemen whose aircraft crashed in Burma while flying missions against the Japanese.

Jerry D. Jennings, deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, met with senior Burmese officials in Rangoon this week to discuss U.S. recovery operations at four sites in Burma. The government of Burma pledged full support for these recovery missions.

CILHI has identified four sites where C-47 cargo aircraft crashed in 1944 and 1945 in the northern part of Burma. Technical talks will be held in Burma in November to arrange details on the excavation of the four sites in early 2003. More than 78,000 Americans are missing in action from WWII.

Saving the Voices of the Past

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Judith E. McCabe

Director, National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

Every day that goes by more and more voices are silenced. Some due to age, others to past injuries from the wars they fought in. With each voice that disappears those experiences are lost. Some were never shared with anyone. This loss affects everyone, especially those in the military.

Last year the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey opened the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories program to record oral histories from veterans of all military conflicts. The center, located at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt, is an official partner with the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. The online National Registry of Service lists the veterans interviewed by the museum as part of the project.

Three summer employees, all history enthusiasts, implemented the program. They were Robert Pontecorvo, a retired high school history teacher, Michelle Carrara, a graduate student in history at Penn State University, and Carol Fowler, a graduate student studying for a teaching certification in history.

Each veteran was asked to fill out a short biographical questionnaire, to include his or her wartime activities. The team then researched the conflict and prepared appropriate questions. Other questions were drawn from the long list provided by the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks and from the Navy Historical Center in Washington, D.C. The questions were used during videotaped interviews of the veterans.

The interviews revealed emotional reactions, detailed descriptions and a sense of satisfaction of how they served their country. The experiences of Maj. Mary Newman, an 89-year old Army nurse, detailed her career from the Asia-Pacific Theater, to Germany, the Caribbean, and into Korea. Sgt. Sonny Pisano, the first veteran interviewed for the center, described his experiences in the Korean War. His letters (some are on display at the museum) detail the daily life he led. Pisano died in January 2002. Lt. Col. Gary Rieth, a retired New Jersey National Guard officer, was a member of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam. The feelings he expressed about the Vietnam Memorial are vivid and poignant.

Each of the interviewees were honored at two luncheons at the Museum. They received a copy of the video and a certificate of appreciation.

Any individual or veterans group interested in giving an oral history may call the museum at 732-974-5966 for more information.



Brig.Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the adjutant general, (left) and Col. Emil Philibosian, deputy commissioner, (right) were made

honorary members of the Marine Corps League, Sept. 23. The honorary membership was in appreciation for the work Brig.Gen. Rieth and Col. Philibosian do on behalf of Marines, the community and Marine Corps League, and especially the Marines in the three state veterans nursing homes, according to Robert "Bob" Swain (center), who is serving his second consecutive term as Commandant of the Department of N.J. Marine Corps League. League headquarters, in Falls Church, Va., approves all honorary memberships. Photo by Tech.Sgt. Mark Olsen, Public Affairs, NJDMAVA

New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial & Vietnam Era Educational Center seek Vietnam veterans to be tour guides

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Educational Center are looking for volunteers tour guides.

They are asking for Vietnam Veterans for help in educating the students of New Jersey. The volunteer tour guides are crucial participants in the tours. The tours are given to New Jersey school students in grades seven to 12 (around 12 to 18 years old.)

The factual information provided to the students during their visit is enhanced by the veteran's personal story. The students want to hear personal experiences to make the history come alive.

Typical questions from students include: "How old were you when you went to Vietnam?" "Did you want to go?" "What did you do in Vietnam?" "What do you remember most?" These questions often take a conversation into a dozen different directions.

When asked what they remember most about their tour, 99 percent of the students say it was the Vietnam Veteran who took the time to share his/her story. Tours are scheduled Monday through Friday. There are two time slots, 9:30 -11:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The ed center schedules 30-minute breaks between tours.

Arrangements will be made for volunteers to tag along with a seasoned tour guide first to see what a school tour is all about.

Vietnam veterans interested in volunteering should call 732-335-0033.



Gloria Burke (left) of VFW Post 491 gathers materials for the residents of Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home while Sandy Gangloff VFW Post 2445 carries a box of stationery for deploying New Jersey National Guardsmen.

Hallmark Donation

Story and Photo by Tech.Sgt. Mark Olsen, Public Affairs, NJDMAVA

It began at the United For Liberty Rally at Liberty State Park October 2001, according to Don Marshall, Veterans of Foreign Wars past state commander. Hallmark, the greeting card company, was so impressed with how the New Jersey National Guard, the active-duty, and the VFW worked together that Hallmark wanted to be part of the team.

To that end, Hallmark initially donated more than \$450,000 wholesale value (three 18-wheeler truck loads) of stationery, calendars, books, decorations and other merchandise.

The big question was where to receive and distribute the merchandise. Maj.Gen. Clark Martin, commander, N.J. Air National Guard, working with Brig.Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the N.J. adjutant general, arranged for use of a warehouse behind DMAVA headquarters.

In November, another shipment of more than \$200,000 of Christmas items, including stationery, gifts, and decorations will be delivered.

Now it is up to the various Guard, active-duty and veteran organizations to distribute the items to deployed Guardsmen, their families, and the state veterans nursing homes. The donated items are only for deployed troops and their families and for hospitalized veterans; not personal use.

For information call 732-244-3550.

Stand Down 2002

A Hand Up to 150 Homeless Veterans

*By G. Natasha Zoe,
Veterans Information Officer*

On Sept. 20 the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) and Stand Down of South Jersey, Inc. co-hosted Stand Down 2002 at the Excelsior Scottish Rite Auditorium in West Collingswood. DMAVA, along with many volunteers, civic organizations, and both public and private support agencies, holds the Stand Downs to provide more than 150 homeless veterans with access to healthcare, mental health screening, substance abuse counseling, social services availability, religious counseling, a hot meal, a haircut and winter clothing. Stand Down's ultimate goal is to show disenfranchised veterans that someone still cares and to assist in bringing their homelessness to a close.

In prior years Stand Down has been held at the Cherry Hill Armory, Fort Dix or Naval Weapon Station Lakehurst. Last year Stand Down was canceled (after September 11 National Guard activations.) In 2000, more than 130 homeless veterans and their families attended the Stand Down. Three of the veterans were admitted directly to Veterans Haven (a transitional housing program for New Jersey's homeless veterans.)

"On any given night there are 341,000 veterans estimated to be homeless, up from 274,000 in 1995," said Col. Kathleen Morrissey, New Jersey Army National Guard. "About one-third of the homeless in the United States have served in the Armed Forces. The number of homeless Vietnam veterans exceeds the number of servicemembers killed during that conflict. There are currently 7,000 homeless veterans in New Jersey."

The term Stand Down came from

the military term referring to exhausted combat units removed from the battlefield to a place of security and safety for rest and recovery. Stand Downs are a grass-roots, community-based intervention program to help homeless veterans battle life on the streets. The program was based on a philosophy of a hand up not a hand out. The first Stand Down was held in 1988 in San Diego. Today more than 80 are held annually to reach an estimated 100,000 homeless veterans.

The organizations supporting Stand Down 2003 were DMAVA, Stand Down of South Jersey, Inc., the U.S. Veterans Administration, The Retired Officers Association, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and their Ladies Auxiliary, Marine Corps League and their Ladies Auxiliary, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Veterans of Foreign Wars and their Ladies Auxiliary, Gold Star Wives, Jewish War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Burlington County Veterans Services Office, Camden County Veterans Services Office, Camden County Board of Social Services, Community Services of Camden County, U.S. Department of Labor, the Fort Dix post chaplains, Ventnor Vets Center, Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council, Veterans Haven and the Cooper Health System which includes Community Health Affairs.

The Food Bank of South Jersey provided the food for the Stand Down.

"In our country's time of need these fine men and women were willing to jeopardize their lives to defend our homes. Now in their time of need the community needs to work together to support and honor our local unsung heroes," said Ellen McDowell, president of the Maple Shade Rotary.

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Governor Honors *Operation Enduring Freedom / Noble Eagle* Veterans

By Roman M. Martyniuk,
Public Affairs Office, NJDMAVA

In keeping with his longstanding practice of demonstrating both his official and passionate personal support for New Jersey's veterans and the patriotic and dedicated men and women currently serving in the armed forces, Governor James E. McGreevey, Commander-in-Chief of the New Jersey National Guard, hosted a special reception and awards ceremony at Drumthwacket, the official residence of the governor in Princeton, to honor New Jersey servicemembers.

U.S. Senators Robert Torricelli and Jon Corzine, and Brig.Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the state's Adjutant General, took part in the event on June 22. Also in attendance were officers and enlisted members of every branch of military service as well as the commanders and representatives of virtually every veteran organization within the state.

The major focus of the program was to honor those soldiers, Marines,

sailors, and airmen serving in *Operation Enduring Freedom*, the ongoing war against terrorism in Afghanistan and other locations, as well as those troops involved in *Operation Noble Eagle* the Homeland Security missions taking place here in the Garden State and throughout the rest of the continental United States.

In his remarks, the Governor praised the men and women in uniform. "At this crucial time in American history, it is imperative that we keep the spirit of patriotism alive in our communities. We must ensure that the work of the military and its veterans - great victories and great sacrifices - are not forgotten.

"Our American servicemen and women have done more to spread the ideals of freedom across the globe in the last century than anyone at any time in all of human history. They work not to conquer, but to protect, defend, and liberate.

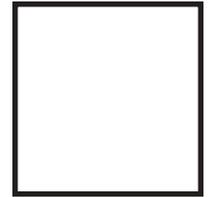
"Today we honor all New Jersey

residents who are working to protect liberty through their participation in *Operation Enduring Freedom*, *Operation Noble Eagle*, and the global war against terrorism."

A special posthumous award was presented to Petty Officer 1st Class Joseph Pycior, Jr., USN who was killed during the terrorist attack against the Pentagon on September 11.

The other award recipients were 1st Sgt. Michael Ansbro, USA; Staff Sgt. Christopher Birardi, USAF; Senior Chief Petty Officer James W. Hennig, USN; Petty Officer 1st Class Frederick S. Kirch, USN; Capt. Adam McLaughlin, USA; Petty Officer 1st Class John F. Pettigrew, USN; Sgt. Eric Ramos, USA; Senior Airman Wiston Rios, USAF; Petty Officer 2nd Class John J. Ruela, USN; Senior Airman Ronald Sanna, Jr., USAF; Pfc. Mahmuti Shkelqim, USA; Capt. James S. Taylor, USA; Chief Petty Officer Franklin Thoma, USN; and Staff Sgt. Victor Tom USAF.

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Department of Military and
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PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Road
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Newark 07102
(973)648-2849 or 645-3596

Atlantic/Cape May

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Atlantic City 08401
(609) 441-3060/3061

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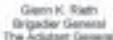
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