



VETERAN JOURNAL



For information on veterans' entitlements call toll-free 1-800-624-0508

November 2003

Veterans Haven - Serving Since 1995

By Staff Sgt. Barb Harbison, NJDMAVA/PA

Since January 1995, more than 460 homeless veterans have come through the doors of Veterans Haven in Winslow, in the search of a new start in their lives.

Veterans Haven is a two year Transitional Housing Program for homeless veterans. Up to 54 veterans are housed in the coed residence. Each veteran has his or her own room with sink, bed, armoire, dresser, night table, television and VCR. Two bathrooms with toilets, showers and bathtubs as well as laundry facilities are located on each floor.

Veterans are given up to two years to get their lives back on track – with lots of help from the staff. During their stay, residents must attend group sessions and other meetings that address subjects such as life skills, job resumes, job searching, alcohol and drug abuse and anger management. The men and women must be drug free when they arrive at the program and they are subject to random testing. Vets who break this rule are asked to leave the program.

Veterans are given the first five months after the initial in processing to take care of any medical and legal problems, as well as begin their job or school searches; most

are working by the end of their third month, according to Robert Durante, Superintendent, Veterans Haven. “By the end of the seventh month, the veteran must be employed,” said Durante. He added that the job should be full-time and meaningful to enable the veteran to pay for all their day-to-day expenses once they are back on their own.

Durante noted that the average stay of the residents at Veterans Haven is nine months. “Our success rate is 69 percent; success (meaning) being fully employed, living on their own and free of substance abuse. The average age of the veterans participating in the program is 44 and the average education level is 14 years of school.

To be eligible to enter Veterans Haven, applicants must be considered veterans by the standards set forth by the Veterans Administration and must be eligible for veterans’ benefits and specifically medical care. Residents use the



Veterans' Haven resident at work on one of the facility's computers. Photo by Staff Sgt. Barbara Harbison NJDMAVA/PA.

VA medical center in Philadelphia for all medical care.

It takes a lot of support to keep
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Vineland Reconstruction Update

By the Veteran Journal Staff

Phase One of the reconstruction of the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home has been completed.

This construction includes all the site preparation, underground utility work and demolition of a portion of Unit 2.

During construction, the facility had to reduce resident capacity by 50 beds. This was completed through attrition and no residents were displaced. Safe movement around the site has been the biggest challenge among residents and staff. Parking also presented some difficulty. Through the support of service organizations, veteran organizations and individuals, golf carts were donated to accommodate transportation of staff, residents and visitors around facility grounds.

Phase Two of the construction has begun. Foundation walls have

been poured and steel erection began Aug. 18. The new facility is taking shape and visitors are encouraged to take the opportunity to visit the site and view the progress.

The Quality Review Board meets monthly to review progress. The board is comprised of NJDMAVA representatives, facility staff, Nadaskay Kopelson Architects, and the construction management team at Gilbane. Sub-committees have been formed for the purchase of furnishings and communication systems. The contractors and the construction management team hold progress meetings weekly.

Although weather has hampered job progress, contractors have been working diligently to make up for lost time to complete the project as close to scheduled completion date as possible.

N.J. Civil Service Veterans Preference And Veterans Status for Pension Purposes

By the Veteran Journal Staff

Veterans seeking to qualify for N.J. Civil Service Veterans Preference or Veterans Status for Pension Purposes will find basic eligibility criteria listed.

Those who wish to apply for veterans preference or veterans status for pension purposes should review the eligibility criteria to determine their individual status. A veteran must meet the military service requirements listed. Disabled veteran preference status applicants must first meet the definition of a veteran under these criteria and then be classified by the Federal Veterans Administration as being at least 10 percent disabled.

Documentation to substantiate disability is required.

Eligibility criteria are established by legislation enacted by the N.J. State Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. Personnel of the N.J. Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs administer the eligibility determination in accordance with laws enacted through the legislative process.

Application forms may be obtained by calling 1-800-624-0508, or via e-mail to: Robert.Wimberly@njdmava.state.nj.us or on the web at www.state.nj.us/military/veterans.



Veteran Journal

James E. McGreevey
Governor

Brig. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth
The Adjutant General

Col. (Ret.) Emil Philibosian
Deputy Commissioner for
Veterans Affairs

Lt. Col. Roberta Niedt
Public Affairs Officer

Staff Sgt. Barbara J. Harbison
Editor-in-Chief

Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen
Roman M. Martyniuk
Staff Writers

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

Message From The Governor

New Jersey will never forget the sacrifices of the more than 615,000 of our state's veterans who answered the call to duty. American servicemen have done more to spread the ideals of freedom across the globe in the last century than anyone, in any time, in all of human history.

I am happy to report that – despite unprecedented budget shortfalls – not a single state veterans program or service has been affected, let alone cut. This administration remains committed to ensuring the best possible quality of life for New Jersey's veterans. We are doing all we can to support your needs.

We are hard at work hiring nurse recruiters to help increase the staff at the state's hospitals, institutions and veterans' homes. I am especially pleased at the success of our Comprehensive Nursing Shortage Task Force. Comprised of public and private sector experts, this task force identified strategies to actively address New Jersey's nursing shortage. They have already made recommendations to attain and retain quality health care professionals for our three Veterans Nursing Homes. Last year, the Task Force submitted its report and shortly thereafter, implementation of their recommendations began in earnest, with \$250,000 earmarked to support some of these initiatives. Earlier this summer, I directed The Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth to implement more of their proposals so we can hire the nurses necessary to open the Old Glory Wing at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home.

Also, through a growing partnership with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, medical services have been made more accessible at New Jersey's ten DVA outpatient clinics. This cooperation between federal and state agencies has proven to be a great success and an invaluable benefit to many New Jersey veterans and their families. In July 2003, we completed a \$5.2 million improvement project at the General Doyle Cemetery.

I am proud to say that we have broken ground on a state-of-the-art expanded facility at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland. This \$52.4



Governor James E. McGreevey (right) and the Brig. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General (left), along with members of the Gold Star Mothers at the 2003 Memorial Day Ceremony at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

million-dollar improvement project will provide South Jersey vets with the best possible long-term residential care. The new, 300-bed facility will consist of 240 long-term care beds, a 32-bed special needs unit and a 28-bed assisted living unit. The assisted living facility will be the first of its kind, within a state veterans nursing home, in the entire nation. Construction began on the site earlier this year. By the spring of 2005, we will begin to move residents into the new home and demolish the remaining, obsolete buildings.

Throughout my career, I have always been an unwavering advocate for the brave men and women who served and sacrificed for our nation. As the son of a Marine Corps Drill instructor, and as the namesake of my uncle who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for extraordinary heroic action at Iwo Jima, I recognize our moral obligation to serve our veteran community.

Once again, thank you for your service to our State and Nation. Your courage has provided peace and prosperity to America, as well as millions around the globe. As Governor, I pledge my administration will continue to work tirelessly and demand the best for New Jersey's veterans.

POWs Sought For Possible Benefits

From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Service

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is asking former prisoners of war not currently using VA benefits to contact VA to find out if they are eligible for disability compensation and other services.

More than 23,000 former prisoners of war (POWs) already receive compensation from VA. This year, the department mailed information about benefits to an additional 4,700 ex-POWs not on its rolls. The VA estimates that there could be as many as 11,000 more POWs for whom it does not have an address or contact information.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi said that VA has expanded policies to cover increasing numbers of former POWs as new illnesses have been found related to captivity. The administration currently is pressing to get even more compensation and medical care benefits for former POWs.

"These veterans sacrificed for their country in time of war, and it's the nation's turn to serve them, to help them determine if they are entitled to compensation, health care or other services," Principi said.

Nine out of 10 former POWs are veterans of World War II, and their service predates the use of Social Security numbers as a military "service number." That,

coupled with the decades that have elapsed since their service, makes it difficult for VA to track down those who have not opened a file with VA in recent years.

The most recent expansion of VA benefits for former POW's was a July regulation that added cirrhosis of the liver to the list of diseases to which entitlement to disability compensation is presumed in former POWs.

Similar policies making it easier for former POW's to obtain compensation have been enacted for POW's detained for 30 days or more who develop specific illnesses.

Former POW's have a special eligibility for enrollment in VA medical care and are exempt from making co-payments for inpatient and outpatient medical care. They have the same co-pay rules as other veterans for medications and for extended care. Free dental treatment for any dental condition is available to former POW's held for more than 90 days.

Former POW's not receiving benefits who did not receive a VA letter recently should call the department at 1-800-827-1000. More information about VA services for former POW's is available at www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/

Oral History Program

*By Chief Warrant Officer 4
Judith McCabe*

The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey in Sea Girt has interviewed more than 200 veterans as part of the Center for United States War Veterans Oral History Program.

The Center's mission is to collect videos of oral histories from veterans of all conflicts and those who helped support them. The Center opened in the summer of 2001.

This summer the program went on the road to the Paramus Veterans Home and Cape May County to interview veterans who could not travel to the museum.

Veterans are asked to fill out a short biographical form with information regarding where they served, dates, awards, campaigns and civilian occupation prior to joining the military. An appointment is then made for the veteran to come to the museum for the interview.

The Center operates in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center. The Library of Congress and the museum in Sea Girt are both repositories for copies of the videos. Members of the public may view the videos for research purposes. Anyone interested in participating in the program may contact the museum at 732-974-5966.

VA Facts And Figures

From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Service

In 2002, VA spent \$23 billion treating 4.6 million veterans, and provided \$25 billion in compensation benefits to 2.4 million veterans, dependents and survivors.

The Veterans Administration is

making special efforts to process the claims of older veterans quickly, including those of former U.S. POWs who served in World War II. The average age for this group is 82.

Gulf War Service-ALS Link Confirmed

From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Service

WASHINGTON – A recent scientific study supports a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy to recognize Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) among veterans of the Gulf War as a service-connected illness.

The study found that veterans who were deployed to the combat theater during the Gulf War were nearly twice as likely to develop the disease as veterans not deployed to the Gulf, accounting for 40 of the 107 cases identified among military personnel. Deployed Air Force personnel were 2.7 times more likely to develop ALS than non-deployed Air Force personnel.

The new ALS study, published in the Sept. 23 issue of the scien-

tific journal *Neurology* and funded by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), does not identify a cause for the disease or the increased occurrence in this group of veterans.

ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, kills cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement, resulting in gradual wasting of the muscles. Fatal in most cases, the disease usually strikes people between ages of 40 and 70. The cause of the disease is unknown.

Earlier this year, VA established a national ALS registry to identify veterans with the disease - regardless of when they served - and track their health status. ALS

veterans who register must participate in an initial telephone interview that covers their health and military service and will be asked to participate in followup interviews twice a year thereafter.

For more information about the ALS Registry, based at the Durham VA Medical Center, call 1-877-DIAL-ALS (1-877-342-5257) or e-mail ALS@med.va.gov.

Since 1994, the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services have spent \$213 million on 224 research projects relating to the health effects of military deployment. VA plans to spend up to an additional \$20 million by the end of the 2004 fiscal year.

New Jersey Medals Programs

Distinguished Service Medal

Veterans must have been a resident of New Jersey upon entry on active duty, served in a combat theater of operations and be a current resident of N.J. Posthumous awards are authorized. An Oak Leaf Cluster is affixed to the service ribbon for those who have been awarded a Purple Heart Medal or higher award. Veterans must have an Honorable Discharge (General Discharge – Under Honorable Conditions does not qualify.)

Meritorious Service Medal

This award is presented to veterans who served in a combat theater of operations and are a current resident of N.J. Awarded only to those veterans who do not qualify for the N.J. Distinguished Service Medal because they were not residents of New Jersey upon entry on

active duty. A posthumous award is authorized. The Oak Leaf Cluster is not authorized. Veterans must have an Honorable Discharge (General Discharge – Under Honorable Conditions does not qualify.)

Vietnam Service Medal

The VSM is awarded to current residents of New Jersey who served on active duty on or after Dec. 31, 1960 and on or before May 7, 1975 in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia or the contiguous waters or airspace of those countries. Posthumous awards are authorized. An Oak Leaf Cluster is not authorized. Veterans must have an Honorable Dis-

charge (General Discharge – Under Honorable Conditions does not qualify.)

To receive an application form for any of these medals, either call: 1-800-624-0508 or e-mail Robert.Wimberly@njdmava.state.nj.us. One form covers all medals.



Left to right: N.J. Meritorious Service Medal, N.J. Distinguished Service Medal and the N.J. Vietnam Service Medal. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen.

SAAs – Veteran Consumer Protection Agencies

By Donna Myers, State Approving Agency

State Approving Agencies have been in existence for more than fifty years in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs in the administration of veterans' educational assistance programs. These programs are more commonly known as GI Bills.

SAAs act as "consumer protection agencies" for the veteran to ensure the quality of education and training programs and to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in preventing fraud, waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

Under Title 38, United States Code, each governor designates a state bureau or department as the State Approving Agency. Professionals within each agency bring a wealth of formal education, training, and experience to the appraisal of programs for veterans' benefits. An ever-changing society has facilitated the need for SAA's to remain on the cutting-edge of program approval to continue to provide opportunities for veterans to stay current with modern technology, develop their employment skills and pursue opportunities for advancement. It is the goal of SAA's to be directly involved with the new and emerging trends in education and training to ensure the highest quality level and availability to veterans.

Since the GI Bill has been in existence, millions of veterans have received entitlements that enabled them to obtain degrees from institutions of higher learning. However, it is important to note that benefits are not limited to college level programs and are also available for non-college degree programs such as vocational-technical schools, OJT (on-the-job-training) and apprenticeships (OJT with related theory instruction).

It is believed that many millions of dollars of en-

titlement money remains unawarded because of lack of knowledge regarding eligibility to collect benefits for such programs. The fact is that in today's changing world employers are demanding training or certification in specific occupational areas, thereby resulting in the need for more vocation-oriented programs.

In addition to continued modification and change of programs at institutions of higher learning, apprenticeship and OJT facilities are accounting for a larger percentage of the new, active facilities. Also, more distance learning programs are being approved along with a limited number of correspondence courses. Benefits can now be obtained for licensing and certification processes while other approvals are emerging in new areas as well.

It is estimated that there are more than 800 trade areas that can be approved and this number is increasing constantly. While a multitude of approved programs provides a wide variety of occupational choices, it is important to know that veterans' benefits are not limited to programs that are already approved. The SAA can have a program approved provided it meets the criteria mandated by federal law. Although not all programs can be approved, the SAA will work with qualified institutions and training sites to ensure that they meet approval requirements.

If you believe you are entitled to benefits under the GI Bill and are currently working in an occupation that may be apprenticeable, please have your employer contact the SAA so the necessary steps can be taken to approve the training program. Contact us at 609-530-6849 or 609-530-6852.

Multi-Purpose Room Slated For Paramus

The New Jersey Veterans Home at Paramus is in the process of planning the addition of a multi-purpose room for the facility. This room will host activities, entertainment and residents' meetings.

Currently, such events are held in one of the facility's three dining rooms. This situation created scheduling challenges and conflicted with mealtime setup, dining and cleanup. Many local veteran's groups donated money to help fund the \$1.5 million project for the architectural plans.

These plans have been accepted by the Veteran's Administration and 65 percent of the funding for construction has been assured.

The Home's Resident Council and area veterans' groups are working to raise the remaining 35 percent of state matching funds. Residents, veterans' organizations and staff look forward to the day when the resident's quality of life will be improved by the completion of this project.

Operation Recognition: Diplomas For Veterans

By the Veteran Journal Staff

Operation Recognition has been expanded to include Korean and Vietnam veterans.

In 2000, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NJDMAVA) and the Department of Education jointly launched a program to honor World War II era veterans who left school to join the military and never received a high school diploma. Known as Operation Recognition, the program was expanded to award a state-endorsed high school diploma to any New Jersey veteran who left a New Jersey high school to enter military service during World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

To date, more than 2,000 high school diplomas have been awarded to New Jersey veterans either by mail or at community ceremonies. Several high schools

have held senior proms and graduation ceremonies for veterans in appreciation for their great sacrifices.

Programs similar to Operation Recognition have been established in a number of other states including Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Who qualifies?

Any current New Jersey veteran who left a New Jersey high school to join the military between the dates of Sept. 16, 1940-Dec. 31, 1946, June 23, 1950-Jan. 31, 1955, or Dec. 31, 1960-May 7, 1975 and were honorably discharged. All branches of service including Merchant Marine and Coast Guard are eligible.

Those who earned a GED are

also eligible. Diplomas may be issued posthumously.

Surviving family members of eligible veterans are urged to apply. The paperwork needed:

A copy of the veterans' DD-214 or discharge papers,

The name and address of the high school the veteran attended,

The year the veteran would have graduated and

The applicant's name, address and daytime phone number.

Send your request to:

Operation Recognition
New Jersey Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
Eggert Crossing Road
P.O. Box 340
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340

For more information: Call Kathy at (609) 530-6854/6876

Getting Copies Of Your Military Records

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC-MPR) is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services during the 20th century.

The NPRC also stores medical treatment records of retirees from all services and records for dependents and other persons treated at naval medical facilities. Information from the Records Center is available upon written request (with signature and date) as allowed by law.

If you are a veteran or the next-of-kin of a deceased veteran, you may now use www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs to request a copy of military records. For all others, the request is best made using a Standard Form 180. The form can be found at www.archives.gov/research_room/obtain_copies/veterans_service_records.html.

Complete instructions for preparing and submitting requests are also posted on the website.

Severe Nursing Shortage Directly Affecting Veterans

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NJDMAVA) is currently seeking Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Certified Nurses Assistants.

The Division of Veterans Healthcare Services of NJDMAVA operates three state-of-the-art, long-term care facilities. They are conveniently located in northern, central and southern New Jersey at, respectively Paramus, Menlo Park (Edison) and Vineland. The Veteran Memorial Homes provide comprehensive, long-term care for New Jersey veterans, spouses and certain eligible dependents in modern, residential settings.

The homes offer specialized in-depth training, orientation, flexible work hours and the opportunity for career growth. Other advantages include a highly competitive salary and benefits package.

If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Ernie Razzano, Health Professions Recruiter, at 609-530-6767.

How To Apply For Veterans Status

By the Veteran Journal Staff

Veteran status can be granted for World War II, the Korean Conflict, or the Vietnam Conflict if the service member had at least 90 days of continuous active military service as long as any part of the 90 days falls on or within the dates listed below.

For World War II, laws extend the definition of a veteran to include any honorably discharged member of the American Merchant Marines who served during World War II and can present a DD-214 which establishes 90 days of continuous active service during the period noted above.

Veteran status for the Lebanon Crisis, the Grenada Peacekeeping Mission, the Lebanon Peacekeeping Mission, the Panama Peacekeeping Mission, Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and Operations Joint Endeavor/Joint Guard in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires that the service member served in the country/region or on ships patrolling the territorial waters of these nations for at least 14 days. For Operation Uphold Democracy, the veteran must fulfill the 14-day requirement as above AND have received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

The 90 or 14-day requirement for service is not prescribed if the veteran was discharged because of a service-incurred disability.

Service with the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and Women's Army Corps (WAC) also qualifies for veteran status.

Absent Without Leave (AWOL) is deducted from total active service and if this reduces the active

service to less than the 90 or 14-day service requirements, veteran status will be denied.

Veteran status can not be granted if an individual received a dishonorable discharge, a discharge from the draft, disenrollment from the Coast Guard Reserve, or a discharge from the reserve with no evidence of active service in time of war.

Veteran status also can not be granted if the individual service was in the:

State Militia; Student Training Corps during World War II; Army of the Allies but not as a citizen of the United States at the time of such service; Military service during peacetime;

Military service for training purposes. Also, Courses of Education and Training under the Army Specialized Training Program or the Navy College Training Program where the courses were a continuation of the individual's civilian courses;

as a cadet or midshipman at one of the service academies; or any military service performed pursuant to the provisions of Section 511 (d) of Title 10, United States Code, pursuant to enlistment in the Army National Guard or as a reserve for Service in the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps or Coast Guard Reserve.

War Era Service Dates:

World War II: Sept. 16, 1940-Dec. 31, 1946.

Korean Conflict: June 23, 1950-Jan. 31, 1955.

Lebanon Crisis: July 1, 1958-Nov. 1, 1958.

Vietnam Conflict: Dec. 31,

1960-May 7, 1975.

Lebanon Peacekeeping Mission: Sept. 26, 1982-Dec. 1, 1987.

Grenada Peacekeeping Mission: Oct. 23, 1983-Nov. 21, 1983.

Panama Peacekeeping Mission: Dec. 20, 1989-Jan. 31, 1990.

Operation Desert Shield/Storm: Aug. 2, 1990 to the present.

Operation Restore Hope (Somalia): Dec. 5, 1992-March 31, 1994.

Operation Joint Endeavor/Joint Guard (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Nov. 20, 1995 to the present.

Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti): Sept. 19, 1994-March 31, 1995.

Military Support For Events

Beginning Oct. 1, anyone requesting military support for an event sponsored by their organization – vehicles, personnel, leasing water trailer tanks, etc. – should go to the Domestic Actions website at www.state.nj.us/military/domac/index.html

The site has information as to who is eligible to receive support, how long prior to the event the request must be made; and includes forms that can be downloaded to make the request. Forms can then be mailed to the Domestic Actions Office, 101 Eggert Crossing Road, Lawrenceville NJ 08648) or faxed to 609-530-7003.

If there are any questions call 609-530-7043.

Veterans' News You Can Use

Compiled by the Veteran Journal Staff

Disabled Military Retirees May Receive Compensation

Under the new requirements of the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act, some military retirees will soon be able to receive monthly payments for service-related health problems.

Combat-Related Special Compensation allows some disabled military retirees to collect monetary compensation for both their military service and their service related disability. Those qualifying may include larger numbers than the term "combat related" implies.

According to the legislation, "combat-related" disabilities refer to:

Anyone who is a 20-year military retiree with at least a 60 percent combined disability rating whose injuries are a "direct result of armed conflict;"

A result of "hazardous" military service;

Were incurred while serving in "conditions simulating war;" or

Are injuries incurred "through an instrumentality of war."

Automatic qualifiers include any military retirees with at least 20 years of service who are rated at least 10 percent disabled by injuries related to the award of a Purple Heart.

Those who apply and are approved will begin receiving payments about 60 days after approval. Payments are retroactive to June 1, 2003 for those whose disability occurred before that date.

Minutewoman Statue Dedicated

The New Jersey Advisory Committee for Women Veterans dedicated the Minutewoman Monument at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery on June 6.

This monument honors all past, present and future women veterans from the state of New Jersey. Retired Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught, United States Air Force, President of the Board of Directors of the Women in Military Service for America Foundation, served as keynote speaker.

The New Jersey Advisory Committee for Women Veterans meets monthly at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park.

VA Grave Marker Application Revised

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has revised its application form to make requesting a VA grave marker easier.

The new form, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (VA Form 40-1330), includes updated information about changes that expand eligibility for a government marker. The VA has also introduced a toll-free fax service for submitting applications that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The application form on the website, www.cem.va.gov can be submitted by either fax or mail.

Questions about a headstone or marker application can be directed to the VA's Memorial Programs Service, Applicant Assistance Unit, at 1-800-697-6947.

VA RX Program Announced

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced a program to fill prescriptions written by non-VA physicians for some veterans waiting to see a VA doctor.

To be eligible, veterans must have enrolled in VA's health care system and requested their first primary care appointment before July 25, 2003. Also, they must have been waiting more than 30 days on Sept. 22, 2003, when the benefit went into effect.

Veterans will be charged a VA co-payment of \$7 if the medicine isn't for a condition related to their military service. This benefit does not apply to veterans who have seen a VA primary care provider or those waiting for appointments with specialists or follow-up appointments. The VA will mail instructions to eligible veterans.

For more information, call the toll-free number on VA health benefits: 1-877-222-8387.



Veterans Haven - Serving Since 1995

Continued from page 1

Veterans Haven a real haven for these veterans in need. Durante thanked the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary; Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary; Rolling Thunder Chapters 2 and 5; The New Jersey State Elks Association Southeast District; Sons of the American Legion; and many other organizations and individuals who contributed time, money and materials during the past nine years and without whose support the program could not have flourished.

He specifically noted some recent contributions from the New Jersey American Legion and Legion Auxiliary of \$36,000 that went toward the purchase of new beds, dressers and night stands for the rooms. Residents received new sinks in their rooms thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the South Jersey Charitable Organizations.

Other recent contributions to Veterans Haven include \$169,000 from a veterans' fraternity in north Jer-

sey, which will be used to renovate the four bathrooms on the second and third floors.

The facility was also the recipient of a \$354,000 HUD grant under the 2002 McKinney-Vento Act, the third such award. This money will be used to defray operating costs. Veterans Haven also receives VA money based on a per diem of \$24.99 per veteran.

Durante said that the program has two grant proposals pending with the Veterans Administration, one for the purchase of a new van and a second to replace the building's transformer and rewire the electrical system.

Of course Durante, as do most owners or managers of older buildings, has a wish list for his building he would like to replace the all the windows and install air conditioning in all resident rooms.

For more information about the program, to volunteer, or to make a donation please call (609) 561-0269, extension 103, or write to: Veterans Haven, PO Box 80, Winslow, NJ 08095-0080, Attn: Robert Durante

Veteran Profile

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has developed a database of veterans who reside in the state. This database is useful in providing New Jersey veterans with information regarding entitlements, special meetings, assessing needs and deciding future goals and initiatives. If you have any questions, please call 1-800-624-0508. Please fill out the form below including the questions at the bottom and mail this form to:

**ATTN: DCVA-DVS
 NJDMAVA
 PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Rd.
 Trenton, N.J. 08625-0340**

Last Name		First Name		Middle
Street Address				
City		County	State	Zip Code
Branch of Service		Dates Of Service		
Military Service (please check as applies)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Between WW I to WW II		<input type="checkbox"/> Grenada (Oct. 23, 1983 - Nov. 21, 1983)		
<input type="checkbox"/> WW II (Sept. 16 1940 - Dec. 31, 1946)		<input type="checkbox"/> Between Grenada and Panama		
<input type="checkbox"/> Between WW II to Korea		<input type="checkbox"/> Panama (Dec. 20, 1989 - Jan. 31, 1990)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Korea (June 23, 1950 - Jan. 31, 1955)		<input type="checkbox"/> Between Panama and Persian Gulf		
<input type="checkbox"/> Between Korea and Vietnam		<input type="checkbox"/> Persian Gulf (Aug. 2, 1990 - Present)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam (Dec. 31, 1960 - May 7, 1975)		<input type="checkbox"/> Somalia (Dec. 5, 1992 - Mar. 31, 1994)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Between Vietnam and Lebanon		<input type="checkbox"/> Bosnia (Nov. 20, 1995 - Present)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanon (Sept. 26, 1982 - Dec. 1, 1987)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Between Lebanon and Grenada				

Veterans' Legislation

Compiled by the NJDMAVA Office of Legislative Liaison

New Jersey Chapter Laws 2003

SJR-13

Memorializes United States Department of Veterans' Affairs to locate new national cemetery in New Jersey. Approved P.L. 2003, JR-3.

A-2489 (S-1769)

Authorizes Adjutant General to issue service medal to commemorate 50th anniversary of ending of Korean War; appropriates \$5,000. Signed by the Governor: Chapter 16, 2003.

A-2777 (S-2310)

Requires NJDMAVA and DOT to conduct study on feasibility of integrating Civil Air Patrol in State's homeland security initiatives. Signed by the Governor: Chapter 103, 2003.

A-3565 (S-730)

Establishes a minimum per diem base pay of \$100 for members of National Guard called to State active duty. Signed by the Governor: Chapter 141, 2003.

A-3567 (S-2507)

Provides State-paid health care benefits coverage through SHBP for certain National Guard members called to State active duty for 30 days or more. Signed by the Governor: Chapter 142, 2003.

S-493 (A-3389)

Exempts from the sales and use tax sales made at concession stands located in State-owned veterans' homes. Approved P.L. 2003, c.165.

New Laws Approved In The 107th Congress

H.R. 1291

Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001.

Authorizes \$3.1 billion over five years to expand and increase educational, housing, burial and disability benefits, including a 46% increase in Montgomery GI Bill education and training benefits. Signed by President Bush on December 27, 2001 (P.L. 107-103).

H.R. 2716

Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001.

Authorizes \$1 billion to aid home-

less veterans and prevent veterans from becoming homeless. Signed by President Bush on December 21, 2001 (P.L. 107-95).

H.R. 3447

Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001.

Adds new and expands existing health care programs for veterans by \$1.4 billion. Signed by President Bush on January 23, 2002 (P.L. 107-135).

H.R. 801

Veterans' Survivor Benefits Improvements Act of 2001.

Adds \$100 million in new health care benefits for surviving spouses of veterans, and extends life insurance coverage to spouses and children of service members. Signed by President Bush on June 5, 2001 (P.L. 107-14).

H.R. 4015

Jobs for Veterans Act.

Reform veterans' job training and placement programs in the Department of Labor through a new system of incentives and accountability. Signed by President Bush on November 7, 2002 (P.L. 107-288).

H.R. 3253

Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Act of 2002.

Expands the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) role in homeland security, creating new research centers to counter biological, chemical, and radiological terrorism. Signed by President Bush on November 7, 2001 (P.L. 107-287).

H.R. 2540

Veterans' Compensation Rate Amendments of 2001.

Provides cost-of-living (COLA) increases for disability compensation payments, increasing total payments by \$2.5 billion over the next five years. Signed by President Bush on December 21, 2001 (P.L. 107-94).

H.R. 4085

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2002.

Increases disability compensation payments with a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Signed by President Bush on October 23, 2002 (P.L. 107-247).

H.R. 1696

Expediting construction of the World War II Memorial.

Removed additional delays in the construction of the World War II Memorial. Signed by President Bush on May 28, 2001 (P.L. 107-11).

H.R. 4608

Naming VA Medical Center in Honor of Robert J. Dole of Kansas.

Names the VA Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas, the 'Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center. Signed by President Bush on May 29, 2002 (P.L. 107-184).

H.R. 4592

Naming the Bob Hope Veterans Chapel.

Designated the Chapel located in the National Cemetery in Los Angeles, California, as the "Bob Hope Veterans Chapel." Signed by President Bush on May 29, 2002 (P.L. 107-184).

S. 2237

Veterans Benefits Improvements Act of 2002.

Expands benefits and compensation for veterans and their surviving spouses; Incorporates provisions of H.R. 4085, H.R. 5055, H.R. 3731, H.R. 2561 and H.R. 2222. Signed by President Bush on December 6, 2002 (P.L. 107-330).

H.R. 5055

Authorizing a New Memorial Honoring World War II Veterans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Authorizes the placement of a new memorial in Arlington National Cemetery honoring World War II veterans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Passed the House July 22, 2002; Incorporated into Public Law 107-330.



State of New Jersey
Department of Military and
Veteran Affairs - PAOV
PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Road
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS SERVICE OFFICES



I Owe You

Atlantic/Cape May
5914 Main St., Suite 102
Mays Landing, NJ 08330
(609) 625-9163/1458
Fax (609) 625-1894
(Tuesday & Thursday)
1333 Atlantic Ave., 2nd Floor
Atlantic County Building
Atlantic City, NJ 08401
(609) 441-3060/3061
Fax (609) 441-3899

Bergen
Center City Plaza
60 State Street
Hackensack 07601-5427
(201) 996-8050/8051
FAX (201) 996-8009

Burlington
Mt. Laurel Corporate Center
1000 Howard Blvd., Suite 301
Mt. Laurel 08054
(856) 787-3820/3821
Fax (856) 787-3822

Camden/Gloucester
215 Crown Point Rd., Suite 300
Thorofare 08086
(856) 853-4184/4185/4186
Fax (856) 384-3781

Essex/Union
1196 Chestnut Street
Elizabeth 07201—1053
(908) 820-3133/3134
Fax:(908) 965-2954

Hudson
3rd Fl, Rm. 302
438 Summit Avenue,
Jersey City 07306-3158
(201) 798-7040/7051/7026
Fax:(201) 798-7036

Mercer
28 W. State Street, 5th fl.
Room 514
PO 671
Trenton 08625-0671
(609) 292-5880/5881
Fax:(609) 633-6852
Middlesex/Somerset
711 Jersey Avenue
New Brunswick 08901-2102

(732) 937-6347/6348/6349
Fax: (732) 937-6417

Monmouth
630 Bangs Avenue, Suite 320
Asbury Park 07712-6904
(732) 775-7009/7005
Fax: (732) 775-3612

Ocean
James J. Howard Outpatient Clinic
970 RT 70
Brick 08724-3550
(732) 840-3033/3034
Fax: (732) 840-0399

Passaic
100 Hamilton Plaza, 6th Floor
Paterson 07505-2101
(973) 977-4050/4051/4556
Fax:(973) 977-4464

Salem/Cumberland
524 Northwest Blvd.
Vineland 08360-2895
(856) 696-6452/6445//6451
Fax: (856) 696-6499

Sussex/Morris
5 South Park Drive
Newton 07860-5000
(973) 383-4949/1363
Fax: (973) 383-1272

Dover (Wednesday)
476 West Clinton Street
Dover, NJ 07801
(973) 366-8347

Warren/Hunterdon
550 Route 57
Port Murray 07865-9482
(908) 689-5840/5845
Fax:(908) 689-5879