



DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

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September 12, 2013

REMEMBERING



New Jersey National Guard Airmen and Soldiers salute the American flag as it is lowered to half-staff during the World Trade Center Memorial and Dedication Ceremony at Borough Hall in Sea Girt, N.J., Sept. 9, 2013, in memory of the Sea Girt citizens killed on 9/11 at the World Trade Center. The memorial includes a piece of steel taken from wreckage of the World Trade Center. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)



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Run For Jorge is a 5K Run/Walk in memory of Staff Sergeant Jorge M. Oliveira who was killed in action in Afghanistan on 19 October 2011. Home Front Hearts, Inc. in conjunction with the 113th Infantry Officer Association is hosting this event at Riverdale Armory on Saturday, 28 September 2013. The funds raised at this event will be used to start a scholarship fund in memory of SSG Oliveira benefiting the family members and Soldiers of the 113th Infantry Regiment.



Location: Riverdale Armory, Newark-Pompton Turnpike, Riverdale, NJ 07457

Date: 28 September 2013

Registration: 8AM – 9AM

Start Time: 10 AM

To register for the race, make a donation or to download a scholarship application, please visit: www.RunForJorge.org

After 9/11 Attacks, civilians and first responders still struggle to “Fix What’s Broken”

Story by Donna Clementoni, Director, Employer Outreach NJESGR

How do you process abject horror?

It has been a dozen years since the World Trade Center attacks, yet, for many civilians, first responders and National Guardsmen, time has not healed all wounds.

A study by New York’s three 9/11 health programs reported that “at least 10,000 firefighters, police officers and civilians exposed to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center have been found to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and in a kind of mass grieving, many of them have yet to recover.”

Most Americans can recall with detailed precision what they were doing when they heard of the brazen attack of innocent civilians on our soil.

America received a resounding wake-up call when two high-jacked planes smashed into the World Trade Center, with insidious plans for mass destruction and with no regard for human life.

Overnight, the word “al Qaeda” became a household word. The world was profoundly changed.

Though the dust and debris have been removed and buildings have been reconstructed, many still live with recurring nightmares, feelings of anxiety and hopelessness and survivor guilt as a result of their experiences and memories from the World Trade Center attacks.

There has been a culture shift in the military structure, as well.

The military readiness was shifted to rely on the skills and expertise of Citizen Soldiers in ways that never before could be imagined.

National Guard Shifts to an Operational Force

From that day on, our nation could not be the fighting force that it is without the role of the Guard and Reserve who represent almost 40 percent of our total defense. One of the most notable changes in the National Guard has been its shift from a Cold War era strategic reserve to its current role as an operational reserve. Since that fateful day that put the world on notice, many of our National Guard and Reserve members have seen multiple deployments overseas.

There is, often, a personal price to pay. As first responders sprang into action, the Department of Defense deployed social workers, mental health professionals and chaplains to provide counseling for both civilians and military affected by the attacks and loved ones of the victims.

New Jersey Army National Guardsmen Spc. Edward Afanador and 1st Lt. James Zozzaro, a chaplain, were among those mobilized, as a unit of two, from their Army National Guard infantry unit out of Woodbury, N.J. Zozzaro had hand selected Afanador to be his chaplain assistant because he was “a good shot and in good shape.” The pair had no idea that they would be bonded, forever, as they struggled to make sense of the haunting images of their Ground Zero deployment.

The Soldiers were activated on Sept. 11, 2001 and would, within days, “hit the ground running” - driving their own vehicle to a NJARNG armory in Jersey City. Shortly after their Sept. 17, 2001 arrival at Ground Zero, Zozzaro learned a disabled civilian parks worker had been left behind in the American Express building adjacent to Ground Zero after a bomb was reported to be in the building. The pair ran against a sea of firemen, police and civilian workers who were evacuating the building and surrounding areas as a result of a bomb scare. Disregarding their own personal safety, they entered the area twice to successfully extract the disabled civilian parks worker. Both would be decorated for their service at Ground Zero and Staten Island.



Chaplain James Zozzaro, right, and Spc. Ed Afanador in front of the destroyed South Tower at the World Trade Center in New York City.

Like many Soldiers and first responders, sleep eluded Afanador. He worked for 80 of the next 90 hours. When he wasn’t acting as his chaplain’s bodyguard, Afanador would volunteer for other duties which included delivering letters from a Cape May County Catholic school to the firemen and Soldiers at Ground Zero. He joined the dog rescue teams, “carrying the bucket” for those tasked with recovering pieces of flesh and bone from the carnage. Afanador saw many things that still keep him up at night and remind him that we can “never forget” the sacrifices that were made on that day and those that would follow.

Harvard Medical School sleep researcher Robert Stickgold has studied the effect of sleep deprivation on Soldiers experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In retrospect, Afanador’s initial exposure to a traumatic event set the groundwork for physical and psychological symptoms that he would be battling over a decade later.

In his findings, Stickgold explains, “When someone experiences a trauma, their body changes biologically. This often results in a state of hyper-arousal or watchfulness which makes it difficult for them to fall asleep.”

A person’s inability to sleep and sustained exposure to human suffering inhibits the body’s ability to process effectively what they experienced. “With proper sleep, the memory will recede and integrate into a person’s past – without it, it might not,” Stickgold said.

Trauma Triggers and Physical Injuries

The calculation of physical damage and trauma to America’s psyche continues.

For Afanador, his life would be forever changed after his respirator failed on Sept. 26, 2001, at the Ground Zero site. Even after being injured, Afanador returned to duty at Ground Zero and Staten Island to fulfill his mission, to his “state, country and God” leaving Afanador permanently disabled.

On this anniversary of the attacks on our nation, remember the innocent victims, the bravery and resolve of the first responders and recovery workers, the tireless volunteers as well as the men and women of our nation’s military that continue to fight the global war on terrorism.

And take a moment to say a *prayer for peace*.

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HIGHLIGHTS

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HIGHLIGHTS



Left to right, Command Sgt. Major John Hicks, Sgt. Majors Mark Leonard and William Collier. Leonard and Collier graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy August 20, 2013. (Courtesy photo)

Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories

The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey is the home of the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral History Project. It is the Center's mission to collect and preserve the memories of veterans through recorded oral history interviews.

This initiative hopes to collect the memoirs of living veterans, as well as artifacts, letters, photographs and mementos from their war experiences. These memories are recorded and housed at the Militia Museum in Sea Girt, N.J. Future visitors, from school groups to retired veterans, will have the opportunity to access this Oral History collection.

The interviews are recorded on videotape and DVD formats and housed at the museum's Sea Girt location, where they are accessible to researchers and scholars. As part of its program of providing historical information to the public, the museum is posting summaries of interviews on the following website: <http://www.nj.gov/military/museum/oralhistory.html>.

To date, the Center's collection contains more than 400 interviews of veterans of all branches of service from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and other American military campaigns.

The Center for U. S. War Veterans' Oral History Program is an official partner of the Library of Congress Veterans' History Project at Washington, D.C. A record of each interview is filed with that organization. Each interviewed veteran receives a copy of his or her recording in their choice of VHS or DVD format for personal use.

To complete the Oral History Project biographical questionnaire form, please click here: <http://www.nj.gov/military/museum/oralhistoryform.html>.

For further information on access to this collection, or to participate in the program, please visit or contact Carol Fowler at the Museum in Sea Girt at 732-974-5966.



Frank Kirby, right, is presented a letter of appreciation for his work with the National Guard Bureau environmental branch by Col. Michael Ahn, NGB Environmental Division Chief. (Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, DMAVA-PA)



Before retiring after a decade at DMAVA, Katheryn Wierzbicki, Quality assurance Coordinator, center, receives an Adjutant General letter and coin from Ray Zawacki, deputy commissioner for Veterans, left and Steve Ferrari, Director of Veterans Health Services, right. (Photo by Kryn P. Westhoven, DMAVA-PA)



NEW JERSEY VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL VIETNAM ERA MUSEUM & EDUCATIONAL CENTER



SATURDAY • SEPTEMBER 28, 2013



Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, left, poses with, left to right, Airman 1st Class Rebecca Roberts, Staff Sgt. Chivonne Green, Capt. Michelle Williams and Sgt Jonathan Bowker - all received a Heart of a Hero Scholarship from First lady Mary Pat Christie's non-profit foundation, New Jersey Heroes, during an awards luncheon at the governor's mansion, Drumthwacket, Princeton, N.J., Sept. 12, 2013. (Photo by Mark C. Olsen)



Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, center left, joins the Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, center, at the U.S. Navy's recruiting table at the Hiring our Heroes job fair at the New Jersey National Guard's Lawrenceville Armory Sept. 12, 2013. The HoH job fair provides active or retired veterans and their families the opportunity to showcase their valuable military skills to veteran-friendly employers. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez)

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