



DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

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January 24, 2014

NJ Veteran Receives His Purple Heart

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Armando Vasquez, NJDMAVA/PA

Seventy years is a lifetime for some. For a New Jersey Army veteran, that's how long it took for him to finally be awarded a medal he earned during combat in World War II in Italy.

Pfc. John LaPuzz, a Paterson, N.J. native, was wounded by shrapnel on his right shoulder while riding in a 2.5-ton Army truck in Italy. That was back in 1944, but because of some clerical errors on his military records, LaPuzz never received his Purple Heart, which is a medal given to those who are wounded or killed, while serving, on or after April 5, 1917, with the U.S. Armed Forces.

But thanks to the relentless effort by his daughter, who provided evidence of her father's injury such as news articles and a Western Union telegram that was sent to LaPuzz's mother on the day he was injured, the Army Board of Review agreed to correct LaPuzz's record and add the Purple Heart to his military awards, which included a Bronze Star Medal.

With the help of U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr., and Passaic county veterans service officer, John Harris, LaPuzz who is currently a resident at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Paramus was finally recognized and presented with his Purple Heart at the Home Jan. 17 in front of his son, John Jr., and daughter, Paula Fenimore.

"This medal is not given, it is earned," said Pascrell during the ceremony to honor the 96-year-old LaPuzz. "We're not going to forget those who served us."

As LaPuzz was presented with his medal, his son and daughter stood proudly and gratified. "My father is a veteran and a hero," said John Jr.

He has always been very proud of his military service, added Paula.

He had to wait this long for a clerical error to be fixed and for his military service to be finally corrected but it was a wait long overdue.

"Now I can die in peace," said LaPuzz. "I finally got my Purple Heart."



U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr., right, pins a Purple Heart Medal on the chest of John LaPuzz as his daughter, Paula Fenimore, left back, and son, John Jr., center back, watch. The 96-year-old World War II, Army veteran and former Paterson native waited almost 70 years for this medal.

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TRICARE ends walk-in admin services at 189 facilities

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - TRICARE military health plan service centers will end administrative walk-in services in the United States on April 1, Pentagon officials said Monday.

While the 189 facilities will stop taking walk-ins, beneficiaries can accomplish any administrative task online or by phone, said Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren.

TRICARE service centers overseas are not affected, Warren said.

“The change will not - let me repeat that - will not affect any TRICARE medical benefit or health care service,” he said. “What it will do is allow the department to save \$250 million over the next five years, allowing TRICARE to invest in more important services.”

Fifty percent of the visits to the centers are for in- and out-

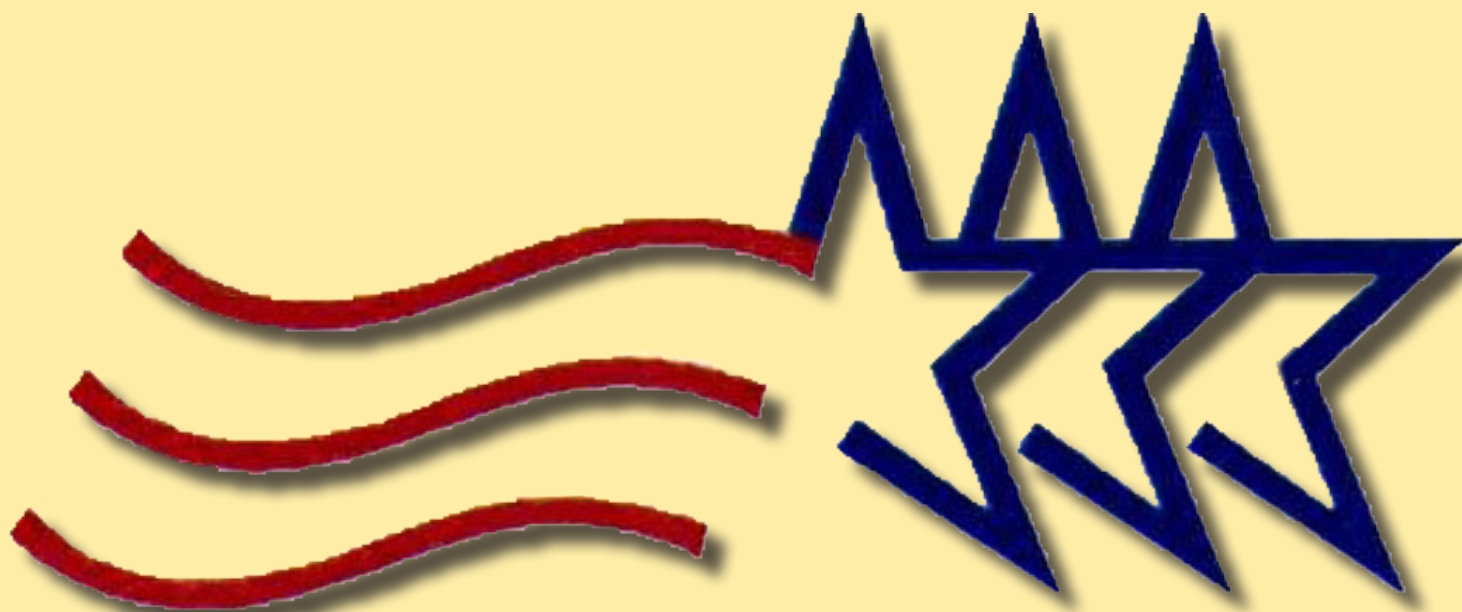
processing and requests to change primary care providers, and the rest involve billing-related questions, officials said.

The Defense Department spends roughly \$50 million a year on these services, and this type of customer service can be handled more efficiently by phone or online, they added.

TRICARE gets about 38,000 hits per day on its website. Officials have run tests to ensure the website and call center can handle the expected increase in volume.

The TRICARE service centers have been around since the 1990s, and contractors staff them, Warren said. “This is being driven by the fact that technology has gotten so much better,” he added.

Customers who need the type of assistance that was being done in these walk-in service centers can quickly and efficiently receive help online or via phone, he said.



T R I C A R E



HIGHLIGHTS

Military Veterans

Skills and Career Transition Workshop

 Resume Writing Skills

 Interview Skills

 Job Fair Prep

 Workplace Skills

Saturday, March 15, 2014

9am- 2pm

1 Johnson & Johnson Plz

New Brunswick, NJ 08933

Register Online at www.gigofund.org
or call 866-389-4446 Ext. 705

The G.I.  Go Fund
Where Veterans Go Forward

Military OneSource



Military OneSource Tax Service

Our tax consultants work with Military OneSource financial counselors to provide complete solutions to your tax questions.



800-342-9647

offers free tax services

By Nick Simeone, American Forces Press Service

If it hasn't arrived yet, your 2013 W-2 wage and tax statement likely is on its way and with it the countdown toward the April 15 tax filing deadline.

As preparations begin for the upcoming tax season, military families are being offered a free service to ensure they can meet that deadline from anywhere they may be stationed around the world.

Military OneSource, partnering with H&R Block, is offering all active duty, Guard and reserve forces help in preparing their taxes and in filing their federal and state returns, in addition to the variety of other financial planning services it already provides free of charge.

"No matter where you are, when you call 800-342-9647 or go to the Military OneSource website, you can access the programs and services," Tony Jackson, a military community and family policy analyst for the service, told American Forces Press Service.

The program is designed to address the unique tax requirements and issues affecting military personnel and their families, Jackson said.

With many still likely dealing with holiday credit card bills, the April tax deadline may seem far off. But with many military families having to file multiple state tax returns in addition to federal taxes, beginning the work now on gathering tax-related documents can prevent headaches later.

"Now is the time to prepare, to gather your documents and your questions," Jackson said, "and you can speak to a tax consultant at no cost at Military OneSource."

Additional paperwork at tax time for those living outside their home state that may have rental property or may be subject to taxes where they are currently deployed is a common additional burden, he noted. Military OneSource will provide help filing a federal tax return, as well as up to three state returns, at no charge.

Jackson said some 224,000 federal and state tax returns were prepared for military families last year.

"Nobody ever gets turned away," he said.

The program's tax experts are able to help military families navigate changes in tax laws that may have a particular impact on or benefit for members of the military - as well as any tax implications related to military benefits, he added.

"They are nationally certified financial planners, so they are definitely qualified to assist families and service members," regardless of the topic, Jackson said.

Reserve component members are eligible for the free service regardless of their activation status, as are veterans within 180 days of being discharged, retired or separated.

The Defense Department established Military OneSource in 2002 to provide comprehensive information on military life free of charge to military families. Visit their Website at www.militaryonesource.mil.

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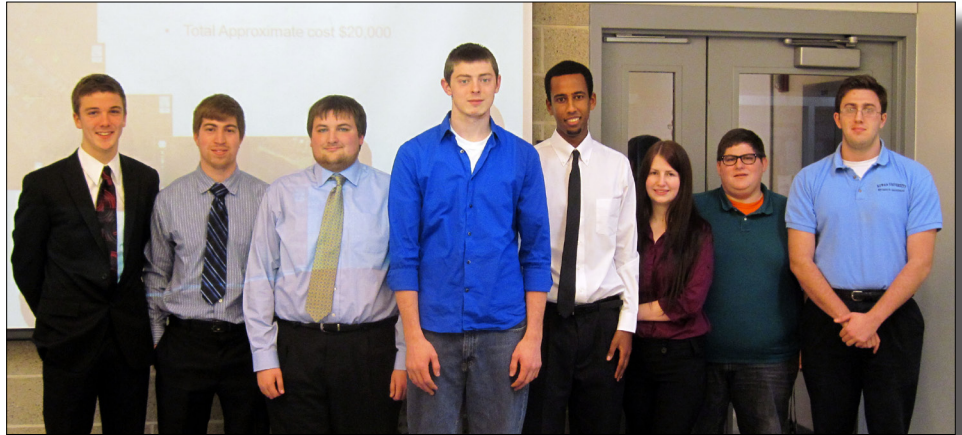
University students help NJARNG “Go Green”, reduce energy costs

In 2012, the New Jersey National Guard contracted Rowan University to develop the “Rowan University Energy Audit Center” and use engineering students to conduct energy audits on New Jersey Army National Guard facilities throughout the state.

Currently in its second year, the 10-year program plays a key role in NJARNG’s efforts to reach a 30 percent reduction in energy use intensity compared to FY 2003. By using university students, NJARNG is able to meet National Guard Bureau audit requirements in a cost effective way while the students are able to receive real world experience that can help them land jobs after graduation.

To date, six former students who have participated in the program are working in an energy related career, including NJARNG’s current energy manager, Christopher Moore. “The energy audit work that these students are doing is not only a great way to gain valuable skills and experience that employers are looking for, but also provides them a way to explore potential career opportunities in the energy field,” said Moore. “It was through my own experience in the program that I decided to pursue a career in energy efficiency and sustainability and have the qualifications to do so.”

For the fall 2013 semester, a group of eight students, overseen by four professors and a graduate student, conducted audits on five buildings at the Sea Girt Regional Training Center. The multi-discipline team was made up of juniors and seniors representing the Civil and Environmental Engi-



Left to right, Andrew Haupin, Civil and Environmental Engineering, class of 2015; Victor Carluccio, Electrical Engineering, class of 2014; Robert Morrone, CEE, class of 2015; Paul Robinson, Mechanical Engineering, class of 2014; Kokeb Abera, CEE, class of 2015; Ashley Davis, CEE, class of 2014; Justin Aboloff, ME, class of 2014; and Alexander Sturm, ME, class of 2014. (Courtesy photo)

neering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering programs. Together they looked at energy and water consumption in buildings 2, 7, 8 and 11 at the Training Center. The group identified opportunities to reduce consumption and utility bills by replacing light bulbs with more efficient models, using thermostat setbacks, upgrading heating and cooling equipment and installing photovoltaic panels. Many of the recommended upgrading would pay for themselves in less than five years.

In addition, the team also conducted a blower door test on building 58. A blower door test is used to determine a building’s air-tightness and is helpful in reducing air leaks, avoiding moisture problems, and determining how much ventilation is needed.

This semester the team developed an action plan for connecting Sea Girt’s 17 smart utility meters into one internet accessible network. Smart meters measure a building’s energy use every 15 minutes which allows for deeper understanding of how, when, and where a building uses energy. This type of work, along with the audits, provides NJARNG with a guide on where to focus efficiency efforts in order to have the maximum impact and return on investment.

Next semester the energy audit team will be performing audits on NJARNG armories throughout south Jersey. For more information about the Rowan program or NJARNG’s efficiency efforts, contact Christopher Moore at 609-530-7124 or Christopher.moore@njdmava.state.nj.us.



Gov. Chris Christie, right, is a presented a ceremonial artillery shell case by Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, the Adjutant General of New Jersey, following Christies’ second inauguration as the 56th Governor of the State of New Jersey at the War Memorial, Trenton, N.J. Jan. 21, 2014. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark Olsen / Released)

HIGHLIGHTS



Monmouth University awarded approximately 600 undergraduate and graduate degrees at its Winter Commencement Ceremony Jan. 17, 2014 at the University's Multipurpose Activity Center. The Commencement marked the largest number of veterans graduating from Monmouth University since the Post 9-11 G.I. Bill with 13 veterans

graduating (two received master's and 11 received bachelor's degrees). Pictured here from left to right are students from the Monmouth University Veterans Association: front, Ericka Steele and Jason King; back, Kevin Downey, Jason Crespo, Gregory Kunze, David Brown and Rob Zilavetz. (Courtesy Photo)

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