Since 1636, the Soldiers of the New Jersey Army National Guard have stood ready to defend the Nation both at home and abroad. New Jersey Guard troops tirelessly serve to protect the citizens of their State from dangers ranging from natural disasters to drug epidemics. Whether it’s guarding the Nation or supporting the communities of the State, the New Jersey Army National Guard remains ready to answer the call.
Creating opportunities at wheeled vehicle mechanic school

BY SFC Class Wayne Woolley

“I’ve always been pretty good at turning wrenches,” said SPC Dillan Moore. “Everybody needs a good mechanic.”

SPC Moore is one of 14 Soldiers from around the country who enrolled in a 6-week wheeled vehicle mechanic class offered by the New Jersey Army National Guard on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

They are a blend of Army active duty, Army Reserve and Army National Guard troops. Most are like SPC Moore – reclassifying from a different military career field in search of greater opportunities.

Take SPC Quisqueya Pickens, 23. She’s a tank mechanic assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. She likes fixing tanks, but feels like her skill set is too limiting.

“Not every Army duty station has tanks,” she said. “I want to be a wheeled vehicle mechanic so I can be stationed anywhere. No limits.”

An attempt to break down a barrier is what brought SPC Carlos Santos to the wheeled vehicle mechanic course as well.

The 28-year-old Army Reservist from Puerto Rico works as a butcher in civilian life. But he loves serving in the military and believes that adding the wheeled vehicle mechanic certifications to his existing specialty of generator repair will help him land a full-time position with the Army Reserve.

“I have a good feeling about taking this course,” he said. “I can really feel my mechanical abilities taking off.”
Local STEM expo aims to honor, remember military

BY Amn Ariel Owings

The U.S. Army South Jersey Recruiting Company Mid-Atlantic Recruiting Battalion hosted the 2018 Honor Day, an annual science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) event at the Eagle Oaks Golf and Country Club, May 24.

The STEM event is an all-day exposition with informational booths and static displays, in an effort focused on recruiting high school students to join the armed forces by showcasing the latest Defense Department technology and educating the community about available opportunities.

Honor Day was founded by Joseph Cary and Arty Crames who, after the events of 9/11, took a group of Marines to eat dinner and play golf at the country club as a way to thank them for their service. In 2008, the club owner, Domenic Gatto, a U.S. Army veteran, found out about the appreciation dinner and decided to construct it into a foundation with Cary and his father, Bill Cary. The foundation was built around three philosophical pillars: “a great unforgettable thank you, education and charitable giving.”

What began as a simple dinner and round of golf for 30 to 40 Marines has transformed into a gathering of about 800 school students, service members and civilians touring military assets and learning about what the military has to offer.

“Honor Day gives us a chance to not only find new recruits, but also give back to the community by displaying a positive image of the military to the general public,” said SSG Edward Santiago, New Jersey Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention recruiter.

Recruiters often have a hard time signing on new recruits when people or parents of high school students don’t understand the military offers many different educational opportunities to all service members. The country club gives the military that chance to offer educational outreach to students and parents in hopes of opening new doors for their future.

“When most people think about the military, they immediately associate it with combat or some type of negative connotation,” said Santiago. “This opens up an opportunity for people to see the different roles offered by the armed forces. [Honor Day] gives people who are not sure about the military these different options and potentials that they can find regardless of what branch they join.”


New Jersey National Guard photo by Amn Ariel Owings
The New Jersey Army National Guard is offering **RE-ENLISTMENT/EXTENSION AND MOS CONVERSION BONUSES** to qualifying Soldiers.

Soldiers who re-enlist for two- or six-year terms and are in pay grades E-3–E-7 with a grade commensurate with position or a position no greater than one grade above the current grade, will receive a **$4,000 BONUS** for two years or a **$20,000 BONUS** for six years.*

Soldiers who agree to retrain in a shortage MOS or current Army National Guard service members serving in an excess position (coded 9993 in the Guard Incentive Management System, or GIMS) and voluntarily/ involuntarily filling a valid vacant position where the MOS is less than 90 percent filled at State level, will receive a $4,000 bonus.**

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* Soldiers must have less than 13 years of Time-In-Service at contract start date, must be DMOSQ unless due to mobilization, reorganization or transformation, and must re-enlist within the extension window 365 days to ETS date.

** Soldiers must be in grade E-6 or below and have completed all service obligations incurred for receipt of an enlistment or retention bonus. E-6 Soldiers may have no more than 10 years of Time-In-Service at start of conversion agreement. Contract is for a three-year service obligation at time of MOS award.
Five New Jersey Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota pilots from the State’s counterdrug unit received the Delaware Medal for Aid to Civil Authority on May 15 for conducting surveillance flights that helped law enforcement in that State break up two large-scale illegal drug distribution networks in August 2017. BG Michael Berry, the Delaware Army National Guard’s land component commander, traveled to New Jersey to present the pilots with the Medal in Service to Civil Authority. The pilots are, from left: CPT Matthew Lombardo, CW4 Eugene Vandergrift, CW4 Keven Devery, CW3 Jim Green and CW2 Jamie Drennen. BG Berry, who served as a Delaware State Police lieutenant in his civilian job, said the surveillance conducted by the New Jersey pilots was instrumental to helping law enforcement officials build the case against the drug networks. “The people of the State of Delaware owe you a debt of gratitude,” BG Berry said at an event at the State aviation facility on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. The largest operation in which the counterdrug pilots flew missions that allowed law enforcement to gather surveillance was dubbed Operation “Golden Horseshoe,” which led to charges against more than 40 people for their alleged operation in a ring that distributed heroin and cocaine in Sussex County, Delaware, over a nine-month period. A second surveillance operation allowed law enforcement to reduce heroin overdose deaths in the region along the Delaware-Maryland border, BG Berry said. In all cases, the New Jersey pilots flew surveillance aircraft and operated cameras at the direction of Delaware law enforcement officers, who were aboard the flights. The aerial surveillance was used to document drug transactions that were often unobservable from the ground. The STEM event is an all-day exposition with informational booths and static displays, in an effort focused on recruiting high school students to join the armed forces by showcasing the latest Defense Department technology and educating the community about available opportunities.
NEW JERSEY CST SOLDIERS PARTNER WITH STATE POLICE AND BOMB SQUAD IN CBRN TRAINING

BY MSgt Matthew Hecht

New Jersey Army National Guard’s 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (WMD-CST) combined forces during a joint exercise with the New Jersey State Police and the Atlantic City and Jersey City Bomb Squads. The combined groups trained in a simulated contamination zone at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., May 4, 2018. The 21st WMD-CST is a joint unit comprised of New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen whose mission is to support civil authorities by identifying CBRN substances in either man-made or natural disasters.

TOP: New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers with the Joint Hazard Assessment Team (JHAT) of the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), and officers from the New Jersey State Police enter the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., to conduct pre-sweeps of the area in an effort to locate notional WMD hazards during a joint exercise May 4, 2018.


BOTTOM: SGT Tricia C. Madrigal (right) survey team member with the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey Army National Guard, monitors a detection device as a New Jersey State Police member opens a simulated WMD device at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., May 4, 2018.

New Jersey National Guard photos by Mark C. Olsen
TOP LEFT: SGT Joseph A. Bercovic (right), 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey National Guard prepares for a radiation sweep of the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., during a training simulation held in May 2018.

TOP RIGHT: Joint Hazard Assessment Team (JHAT) member SGT Mauricio Caceres, 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey National Guard, inspects a trash container for fictional WMD devices while participating in a training exercise at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., in May 2018.

BOTTOM LEFT: Joint Hazard Assessment Team (JHAT) members SSG Nicky Lam (left), 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey National Guard, and New Jersey State Police officer Sgt. Nick Forrestal simulate a WMD sweep at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., in May 2018.

New Jersey National Guard photos by Mark C. Olsen
NEW JERSEY GUARD SOLDIERS MASTER MARKSMANSHIP AT INFANTRY ADVANCED LEADER COURSE
BY MSgt Matthew Hecht

New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers participated in Infantry Advanced Leader Course marksmanship training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 9, 2018. The course, which is run by the New Jersey Army National Guard’s 254th Regiment, focuses on leadership and technical skills required to prepare Soldiers to effectively lead squad and platoon-size units.


MIDDLE: A New Jersey Army National Guard Soldier marks targets hit on a range card during Infantry Advanced Leader Course marksmanship training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 9, 2018.


New Jersey National Guard Photo by MSgt Matt Hecht
TOP LEFT: New Jersey Army National Guard Infantry Advanced Leader Course students are briefed on range safety procedures during marksmanship training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 9, 2018.


MIDDLE LEFT: A New Jersey Guard Soldier fires on targets 100 meters away during Infantry Advanced Leader Course marksmanship training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 9, 2018.


New Jersey National Guard photos by MSgt Matt Hecht
THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE FAMILY READINESS COUNCIL

THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE FAMILY READINESS COUNCIL (NGSFR C) is a non-governmental advocate to the Soldiers and Families of the New Jersey National Guard.

The Council exists to support New Jersey National Guard Families during challenging times – such as those related to a typical deployment of 18 months or longer where the loss of civilian pay or benefits may occur. NGSFR C offers assistance through a grant program funded by private and public contributions.

Since its inception, the Council has awarded over $1.6 million for programs to assist our “Hometown Heroes” and their Families.

For more information or to request assistance, visit NationalGuardSFRC.org or call (732) 814-2526.
New Jersey Guard Soldiers
Excel in Inaugural Command of Camp Sparta

STORY BY SSG Christopher Stoltz

During the 2017 holiday season, most of the current staff from Joint Special Operations Forces Support Detachment - K (JSSD-K) were in their home State of New Jersey, preparing for an upcoming deployment – but the mission was unknown.

Fast-forward six months to current day and these same New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers of the 117th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion are in operational command of Camp Sparta – a trans-regional, intermediate-level staging base and logistics hub for special operations personnel and cargo supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom Sentinel.

This marks the first time the JSSD-K mission, operated from an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, had been led by Army National Guard Soldiers.

“We are all [familiar with the phrase] ‘do more with less,’ ” said LTC Jose D. Maldonado, JSSD-K commander. “In the Guard, we do not have the same time or resources as active duty to complete the mission, but we push forward and always find a way to get the mission done to standard.”

When not wearing their uniforms, the Soldiers of 117th work in a wide range of civilian careers, including electrical engineers, vehicle operators, logisticians, police officers, project managers and even a federal agent.

“We have a generator mechanic who is also an electrician, and we have a logistics officer who is also an engineer,” said CPT Nicholas Zingara, JSSD-K executive officer. “They are able to serve as real force multipliers working outside of their regular specialties, enhancing mission capabilities.”

Those skills served these Guard Soldiers well when they were Stateside in New Jersey responding to State emergencies and natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Now, this new deployed environment offers the group an opportunity to broaden and strengthen their skills.

“This is an opportunity that a traditional Guard Soldier does not usually get,” said CPT Zingara. “This is something new and exciting and we are happy to be in a position to help SOF (Special-Operations Forces) warfighters meet their objectives.”

One new skill learned by the Spartans, as the leaders of Camp Sparta are called, was how to overcome the inter-service ‘language’ barrier – the different methods and terminology used by the members of their sister services.

To operate the camp effectively, the New Jersey Soldiers had to quickly familiarize themselves with Air Force day-to-day operations. LTC Maldonado noted that is essential, especially when executing transport operations for the largest aerial port in the area of responsibility.

The team overcame this hurdle by persistently networking with Air Force personnel and proactively engaging with them during the early stages of their deployment.

“That is manned by members of the 5th Special Forces Group Support Battalion. In addition to Army and Air Force personnel, the camp is also occupied by logisticians from Support Center Iraq, manned by members of Naval Special Warfare Command and Marine Special Operations Command, and Support Center Syria, which is manned by members of the 5th Special Forces Group Support Battalion.

“One of the greatest desires a Soldier has is to feel like they are part of a team – like they’re making an impact,” said SFC Carlos Johnson, JSSD-K operations non-commissioned officer-in-charge. “Seeing supplies get out to Soldiers in need, be it a decent meal or a refrigerator so they can have a cold drink, is an amazing feeling.”

LTC Maldonado stated that he is impressed by his team’s ability to adjust to the rigors of a deployed environment. He also said he expected them to “hit the ground running”, especially since most have years of experience working together. This ‘pre-built rapport’ serves as yet another unique benefit brought by Guard personnel.

“I am very proud of our team and their service,” LTC Maldonado said. “While there may have been some growing pains, I believe keeping a team mindset and focusing on building relationships has helped us to quickly adapt and overcome challenges. It gives me peace of mind knowing we will always be able to get the job done.”

ABOVE: SGT William Poley, JSSD-K movements specialist, uses a Kalmar RT240 rough terrain container handler to lift equipment at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia.

U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt Christopher Stoltz

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AIR ASSAULT SOLDIERS COMPLETE LIVE FIRE DRILLS

BY MSgt Matthew Hecht

New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry (Air Assault) conducted live fire battle drills on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., April 9, 2018. Headquartered in Woodbury, Gloucester County, New Jersey, the Charlie Company Soldiers worked to sharpen their maneuvering skills while training with M249 Light Machine Guns. The training included both dry and live fire drills.


MIDDLE RIGHT: Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry rush towards an objective during battle drills, April 9, 2018.


BOTTOM RIGHT: LTC Kevin Welsh (left) commander of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry points out objectives to his soldiers before live fire battle drills on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., April 9, 2018.

New Jersey National Guard photos by MSgt Matt Hecht
SOLDIERS SHOW THEIR GRIT AT THE NEW JERSEY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD’S BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

BY MSgt Matthew Hecht

Congratulations to SPC Anatoliy Terentiev, left, and SGT Michael Henri, first place finishers in the New Jersey Army National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition which finished on April 26. SGT Henri is assigned to the 2-113 Infantry and SPC Terentiev is assigned to the 1-114 Infantry. They prevailed over 13 fellow Soldiers and one Airman during a grueling three-day series of events that included a 9-mile ruck march, stress shoot, physical fitness test, timed swim, sprints, day and night land navigation and a test of soldiering skill knowledge. All on four-hours of sleep a night. Hooah!

TOP: SPC Anatoliy Terentiev, left, and SGT Michael Henri
Photo courtesy New Jersey National Guard

New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen

MIDDLE: SGT Scott Dorsey, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry performs a high crawl during the New Jersey Army National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition, April 25, 2018.

BOTTOM: SGT Henri Michael, 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry fires an M4 carbine from behind a barrier during the New Jersey Army National Guard’s 2018 Best Warrior Competition at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., this past April.

New Jersey National Guard photos by Mark C. Olsen
Free Tuition

THE NEW JERSEY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SETS THE BAR HIGH WHEN IT COMES TO HIGHER LEARNING.

Committed to providing the best education opportunities for our Soldiers, the New Jersey Army National Guard offers 100 percent free tuition for both undergraduate and graduate studies.

Members of the New Jersey Army National Guard are authorized to attend regularly scheduled courses at any of New Jersey’s 30 public colleges and universities. Soldiers receive up to 16 tuition-free credits per semester. Soldiers must have completed Initial Entry Training and be in good standing with their unit to qualify.

For a list of participating schools, visit NJArmyGuard.com/tuition