

Discussion Points

1. Traditionally, the mission and core responsibilities of the New Jersey National Guard have been to ensure homeland security and to be the military first responders in the event of natural disasters or terrorist attacks here in the State of New Jersey. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 (9-11), however, the role of the New Jersey National Guard (NJNG), in conjunction with the United States National Guard, has changed from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

- **Questions: Please describe the transition of the NJNG from a strategic reserve to an operational force.**

With the advent of the Global War on Terrorism the structure and traditional roles of the National Guard and Reserve elements changed significantly. National Guard and Reserve units are rotated into the war alongside of their active duty counterparts, performing the identical missions with the equal or better precision and competence. As reliance on the skills of reserve components grew so did their use as an operational force.

How has the composition of the NJNG changed over the past five years in terms of age, experience, and expectations?

Yes, deployments and new missions have transformed the National Guard into a younger, better trained, more relevant organization. The average age of today's National Guard Member is 23 years old.

Please describe how other factors such as personnel readiness/preparedness and equipment needs availability have changed given the transition.

As a result of an overall transformation experienced throughout the Armed Forces, the Department of Defense has gone from a Cold War mentality to a mobile, modern military using technological advances to maintain battlefield superiority. With the new mobilization schedule, the Guard must maintain a high level of preparedness even when a mobilization is not imminent.

Has the transition affected DMAVA's recruiting effort?

Yes, recruiting and retention is at an all time high for the NJNG. Strength (number of soldiers and airmen) is over 100% and monthly recruiting numbers exceed all efforts prior to 2005.

Which War on Terror deployments has the NJNG participated in since 9-11 and how many service personnel have been deployed?

The major deployments of the NJNG include Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Peacekeeping in the Sinai, Guantanamo Bay Security Operation and Operation Jump Start (Mexican Border).

Please describe some of the successes and losses of those deployments.

The NJNG has served with distinction in every deployment from a short one week assignment to the 15 month extended mission to Iraq by the 117th Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) and 250th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) of the NJANG. By far the biggest loss experienced by the NJNG was when four Soldiers were killed in action over a two-day period in Iraq.

Are there any New Jersey National Guard troops in Iraq that are preparing to come home? If yes, what were their missions?

No, the 108th Air Refueling Wing's Security Forces Squadron returned from Iraq on 24 March. There some National Guard members on individual deployment but no large groups at this time.

1a. In recent testimony before the Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs provided detailed information regarding the 2008 deployment process and related issues of the New Jersey National Army and Air Guards in support of Operations Iraq Freedom (OIF) and Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF). It is estimated that approximately half of the New Jersey National Guard will be deployed within the next six months. Specifically, 2,875 soldiers of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat team will deploy to Iraq. In addition, a Military Police Company and Water Purification and Chemical Units will also be deployed. It is estimated that the training and active duty components of this deployment will be approximately eighteen to twenty months.

• Questions: What is the overall strength of the New Jersey National Army and Air Guard?

NJ Army National Guard – over 100%

NJ Air National Guard – over 99.73%

Please describe the Soldier Readiness Process (SRP) for pre-deployment for a new recruit and a seasoned soldier being deployed in 2008.

The Soldier Readiness Program consists of all of medical, legal and administrative details necessary for deployment. There is no difference in processing an experienced soldier or a new recruit. Everyone must complete all of the required steps in order to be deployed.

What are predeployment site surveys and what is the purpose of conducting these surveys?

Predeployment site surveys are similar to an Advance operation in the political world. The process allows the unit to get critical planning and logistical information prior to deployment.

What is the mission of the current troops being deployed?

The 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will be engaged in a security during their deployment in Iraq.

Please describe any additional plans for deployment in the near future.

Upcoming additional deployments include Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotations and 150th Aviation Assault Battalion (12 UH-60s) with approximately 320 members.

1b. Since 9-11, the NJNG has provided homeland security and first response services at military installations, airports, nuclear power plants, and for transportation infrastructure and hurricane relief. In addition, the NJNG has served in the Sinai Desert, Guantanamo Bay, and the European theatre of operations.

• Questions: Please describe in detail the strength of our troops who will remain in New Jersey to provide first response services for homeland security and disaster relief and our level of preparedness to respond.

Even though half of the NJ National Guard will be deployed, the remaining troops will be fully prepared and ready to respond to any homeland security incident or natural disaster.

Is the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs working with neighboring states to provide and receive additional support in the case of natural disasters and terrorist attacks?

Within the Northeast region of the country, homeland security plans through mutual aid agreements have been designed to serve as back-up when needed to assist with emergencies or disasters. These plans include details identifying what skills sets and resources are available in each participating State.

Please describe some homeland security efforts that the NJNG provides that protect our borders and shoreline.

The newest state mission began in 2007 as the NJNG joined with the New York Guard to provide additional security for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey at their major transportation facilities. On an older mission, National Guard members have been safeguarding New Jersey's nuclear power plants since 2001.

1c. Through the State Partnership Program, the NJNG is helping Albania prepare to become a member of NATO. The NJNG has focused efforts on training Albania's deployable forces, leadership development, and assisting the Ministry of Defense with prioritizing the country's efforts to field units that meet NATO's standards.

• **Questions:** Please describe the State Partnership Program. What is the mission of the State Partnership Program? Is this a State and federal program? How is this program funded? Please describe the NJNG's role, efforts, and achievements in assisting Albania.

The New Jersey-Albania Partnership for Peace, begun in 1993, is a National Guard Bureau program (federal). The Jersey Guard has focused efforts on training Albania's deployable forces, leadership development, and assisting the Ministry of Defense with prioritizing his country's efforts to field units that meet NATO standards. Last Friday Albania was offered and accepted membership in the NATO alliance. Unit Level Exchanges (ULE's) have been conducted both in Albania and the United States. These exchanges have led to increased understanding of how both militaries operate. In addition to training, we have also provided Humanitarian Assistance to help counter ideological support to terror, build strong relationships and foster goodwill. This has been a significant force multiplier in Albania. The SPP is funded through the USD.

1d. Various programs have been established to provide support to the families of the service personnel who have been deployed. There are family assistance centers, family readiness groups, and a New Jersey State Readiness Council that raises money from communities to support the families of the citizen soldiers.

• **Questions:** Please describe these programs in terms of their missions, goals, and achievements. Please describe some of their outreach efforts.

The Family Readiness Group is a program designed to help prepare families for separation from their spouse during a deployment. Family members act as volunteers providing assistance to other families throughout the deployment. They answer questions, refer individuals to resources, look for solutions to problems and are there to listen and ease stress. Family Assistance Centers, set up in the Armories, provide the basic necessities that a struggling family may be unable to afford due a differential in civilian and military pay. In addition to these programs, the New Jersey State Readiness Council was established to provide grants to struggling families. They also provide assistance to small business helping to reestablish self-employed Citizen Soldier upon their demobilization.

2. In FY 2007, the Governor created a Yellow Ribbon Commission on Returning Combat Veterans (YRC) under the purview of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA). The commission was established to determine the emergent issues facing OEF Afghanistan and OIF veterans and to determine the most efficient ways to reach these soldiers and the programs most important to their successful community reintegration. According to DMAVA, the goal of the Outreach Program is to encourage veterans and their family members to contact the nearest veterans service officer for assistance in filing appropriate claims and applying for every benefit they are eligible to receive. The YRC is composed of stakeholders and veterans from throughout the State who are involved in some aspect of veterans reintegration. The commission's findings were to be filed in a report to the Governor and the Adjutant General for determination of the allocations of grant money.

• **Questions:** Please discuss in detail the commission's findings as reported to the Governor and the Adjutant General, specifically with regard to the best means to conduct outreach to returning combat veterans and what services would provide the greatest assistance.

The commission determined four areas of concern with regard to Returning Combat Veterans; Outreach, Healthcare, Family Issues and Job/Career Issues. In order to inform the largest possible applicable Veteran population the commission developed a comprehensive outreach program through Targeted Direct Mail, Informational Brochures, Veterans' Service Officers manned statewide traveling Informational Kiosk, Website Hotline, Media, Mall and outdoor advertising. Services differ with each individual's needs. Some of the new or augmented initiatives include a Medical and Psychological Needs Assessment Study; transportation assistance to medical facilities; a Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program; and Veteran and Family Emergency Financial Aid.

• **What percentage of total New Jersey National Guard veterans does the department estimate are reached upon their return? What percentage of New Jersey US Armed Forces veterans does the department estimate are reached upon their return? What progress is being made with regard to the department working with federal legislators on legislation that would require the Department of Defense to notify us on a monthly basis when active duty service members return to New Jersey so we can ensure they are aware of all programs available?**

The NJNG, through the Soldier Reconstitution Program and periodic follow-up reaches 100% of returning NJNG veterans. Since we do not have complete information on New Jersey residents who served with Active Duty or Reserve components, we cannot determine the overall percentage. Federal legislation requiring Department of Defense to notify each State on a monthly basis of all discharges would facilitate better outreach and ultimately services.

• **Please provide a copy of the report that was filed with the Governor and the Adjutant General.**

Copies of the report follow the discussion points.

2a. Recent reports prepared for the U.S. Veterans Affairs Department suggest that young veterans returning to the workforce after serving in the U.S. military have a more difficult time finding jobs and are paid less than their civilian counterparts.

• **Question:** What programs does the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs offer to educate and reintegrate not only National Guard veterans back into the workforce but also New Jersey members of the U.S. Armed Services?

DMAVA provides numerous programs geared at assisting Veterans educate and reintegrate back into the workforce. These programs include: New Jersey National Guard Educational Benefits; Montgomery GI Bill Benefits; Operation Recognition – High School diplomas for Veterans;

POW / MIA tuition Benefits; Veterans Civil Service and Pension Status; Helmets to Hard Hats; Tanks to Teachers and linkages to the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce programs for returning Veterans.

2b. In the FY 2008 budget, \$1 million was appropriated and allocated to fund the YRC . A portion of this allocation was earmarked to provide relief, in the form of grants for a range of veteran/family emergencies and business "Re-Start" assistance. Any OEF or OIF veteran is eligible to apply for a grant. Family members are eligible if the grant will directly or indirectly aid or provide care for the veteran. All immediate family members are eligible for basic subsistence grants. A cumulative maximum amount of \$2,500 is available for veteran/family grants. The Business "Re-Start" grant is limited to a maximum of \$5,000.

• Questions: Please describe how the \$1 million appropriated in FY 2008 was allocated. Specifically, what percentage of the appropriation was allocated for the administrative expenses of the commission, what percentage was allocated to fund the research and findings of the commission, and what percentage was allocated for the grants?

The YRC appropriation was allocated as follows:

<u>Healthcare</u>	
Medical and Psychological Needs Assessment Study	\$ 111,500
Transportation GIA Supplement	\$ 203,500
Suicide Awareness and Prevention	\$ 22,000
	\$ 337,000
<u>Outreach</u>	
Targeted Direct Mail	\$140,000
Brochures and Displays	\$ 30,000
Hotline Website Development	\$ 25,000
Media	\$ 90,000
	\$ 285,000
<u>Veteran/Family Support</u>	
Subsistence Grants	\$ 278,000
Individual/Family and Business "Re-Start" Grants	\$ 100,000
	\$ 378,000
Yellow Ribbon Appropriation Total	\$ 1,000,000

Commission members served as volunteers as a result no funds were expended or obligated in conducting research, preparing the findings or for administrative expenses.

Please provide a list of the types of grants being awarded. How many grants of each type of grant were awarded and how much was allocated for each type of grant? What is the total cost of the grants awarded?

To date grants have been awarded for relocation expense, rent arrearage, mortgage arrearage, and subsistence allowance pending VA disability claim. In addition, grants are available for basic subsistence, utility shutoff, heating oil, emergency home repairs, primary vehicle repair, and business re-start assistance. Since 21 Feb-08 twelve grants have been processed. Eleven have been approved, one denied. Five are pending review.

Of the grants awarded one was for eviction (\$1,800), five for rent or mortgage arrearage (\$2,500 ea) and five for pending claim subsistence (\$3,000 ea) for a total of \$29,300 in the first 5 weeks since program initiation.

2c. The FY 2009 Governor's Budget recommends an appropriation of \$1million to fund the commission for another year.

• **Questions:** In the department's estimation, please describe the successes of the YRC and how effective it is. How will the FY 2009 funding be allocated? Is the current level of funding sufficient to meet the needs of the returning veterans?

The two biggest successes, outside of providing emergency assistance to veterans, were reestablishing the need for effective and comprehensive outreach to inform veterans of available state and federal benefits and services; and the integration and linkage of the public and private veteran provider network. The 2009 appropriation will break down roughly the same as 2008, however the amount and mix of individual items within the major categories may vary. The current appropriation is adequate for the established program. A meeting is scheduled for the Commission to conduct a review to determine if any previously unidentified issues now need to be addressed.

3. According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (NCPTSD), PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a life-threatening, traumatic event. In the military, PTSD in veterans is a result of engaging in combat. Prior to its designation as a mental health disorder, PTSD was known as "soldier's heart" in the United States Civil War, "shell shock" in World War I, and "combat fatigue" in World War II. Other terms used to describe PTSD include "war neurosis" and "operational fatigue." Over the past four years, the increase in the demand for PTSD counseling has increased by 106 percent reaching an estimated demand of 16,798 counseling sessions in FY 2009. According to the department, the State PTSD program provides counseling services for up to 84 months (7 years) of services. In the first year of enrollment, a typical veteran and his/her family attends counseling at least four times per month. Counselors are paid on a per session basis. The maximum amount paid to a provider per individual session is \$100 and decreases on a sliding scale during the 84 months of counseling. The department is currently in discussions with the NJ National Guard and the National Guard Bureau with regard to having them absorb some or all of their current administrative costs, using federal dollars. The FY 2009 Governor's Budget recommends funding PTSD at the same level as last year, \$1.3 million.

• **Questions:** Please describe the estimated effect that funding PTSD at the same level as last year will have on the services provided to returning veterans determined to be suffering from PTSD.

During FY 2007, the program serviced 575 clients in 12,701 counseling sessions. FY 2008 to date, we have serviced 624 clients in 9,837 sessions held between July 2007 and February 2008. This fiscal year, our state program has seen an increase of 5.6% in patient load and can now estimate an increase of 6.5% for FY2009. The funding level will enable PTSD services to continue but as Soldiers begin to return from our major deployments statistics indicate that the need for services will increase.

• What percentage of veterans diagnosed with PTSD seek services?

It is estimated 60% of OIF/OEF vets show symptoms of PTSD but are *unlikely* to seek help due to the stigma that is still associated with any psychological problem.

How many veterans are currently receiving treatment for PTSD? How large is the backlog for veterans waiting to receive services? How long will a veteran on the waiting list to receive PTSD services have to wait to receive services?

There is no current backlog of veterans awaiting treatment through the state PTSD program.

What is the average length of time that a veteran with PTSD will stay in treatment?

The majority of those enrolled in the state PTSD program utilize the full 84 month - 7 years of available service.

• What is the total average cost of providing treatment to a veteran with PTSD? Has the department been successful in having the New Jersey Army National Guard and National Guard Bureau absorb administrative costs, using federal dollars? If so, what is the value of the administrative costs and are those funds being used to fund additional PTSD services? If the funds are not being used to fund additional PTSD services, how are the funds being used?

During the first year, the typical veteran and his/her family generally receive counseling four times per month, with the frequency of sessions diminishing over time and with group sessions then being substituted for individual counseling. Providers are paid on a per hours basis, whether the session is for an individual or a group. The current hourly rates are \$130 per hour for a private counseling session, \$80 per hour for a group. We estimate that the cost of treating a single veteran, enrolled for the full 7 year program, will be \$11,700. This department has not been successful in its efforts to have the NJ Army National Guard and/or National Guard Bureau fund any portion of this program, or its administrative expenses which total \$195,000, annually.

• In the department's estimation, how successful is the PTSD program?

The Department believes that our PTSD program has been both successful and cost effective, as it fills a void left in services provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The societal cost of the state not providing such services is incalculable, just as projecting the future cost of this program is nowhere near an exact science. The incidence of PTSD will be directly related to the nature of the experience of our troops in the field and we must be mindful of the fact that we will deploy 4,000 New Jersey troops overseas, beginning June 1, 2009.

4. The Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery, located in Burlington County, was first dedicated on May 30, 1986 by then Governor Thomas H. Kean. The facility was funded jointly by the State and federal governments and is managed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Since then, the cemetery has become the nation's busiest State veterans cemetery and the eleventh busiest veteran cemetery of all types, state or federal, with approximately 12 to 15 burials occurring each business day. Maintenance and operation of the cemetery, and funding for burials, is provided by both State appropriations and the US Department of Veterans Affairs Plot Interment Allowance (\$300 per veteran interred). There is no cost to an eligible veteran for burial at Doyle Cemetery. The FY 2009 recommends an appropriation of \$2.3 million in burial services, a reduction \$126,000.

• Questions: How will the reduction of \$126,000 affect the provision of burial services at Doyle Cemetery?

The reduction of \$126,000, in the cemetery's state appropriation, eliminates 4 positions; three positions; two regular staff positions and one position on the honor guard, vacant because the employee is currently deployed. That employee must be rehired, upon his return, if not to the same then to a comparable position. One of the staff positions being eliminated is that of Assistant Superintendent.

How is the federal interment allowance calculated?

Plot Interment Allowance (PIA) is payable upon burial of an eligible veteran (spouses and dependents are not entitled to PIA) and the amount paid is based on the veteran's date of death. A veteran who died prior to December 1, 2001 is entitled to a PIA of \$150; a veteran dying after December 1, 2001 is entitled to a \$300 PIA.

What was the allowance in FY 2007 and what are the estimated allowances for FY2008 and FY 2009?

Over the last four years, we have interred a consistent number of veterans: averaging 1910 PIA eligible veterans per year. We would estimate that we will inter at least that number in 2008, 2009 and 2010; which are considered to be the peak mortality years for World War II era veterans

4a. According to the FY 2009 Governor's Budget, the \$3.7 million federally funded R crypt field was completed in August 2007 and provides an additional 5,300 gravesites. Rated capacity for the cemetery, assuming full funding of the expansion and improvements outlined in the Cemetery Master Plan, is now 215,000 gravesites, an increase of 59,000 gravesites. Total estimated interments in FY 2009 are 44,557 which is 2,800, higher than last year. Over the past four years interments have increased, on average, by 2,750 interments annually. The Governor's Budget assumes that within a two- year period expanded operations at the Doyle Cemetery will bring in over \$11 million of federal funding.

• **Questions: Please describe the capacity utilization at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery.**

The cemetery's projected burial capacity was established as 215,000, with a majority of gravesites or columbarium niches holding two sets of remains (first & second interments, typically husband and wife). To date, the cemetery has interred 40,803 remains in 34,644 graves. Of a total of 62,201 graves that have been developed, 27,557 empty graves (constituting single depth, double depth, columbarium niches and in-ground cremations) are currently available.

What are the current estimates for the cemetery to reach full capacity?

Given the current interment rates, the Doyle Cemetery will reach its full capacity, on or about the year 2050.

How much ground is available for future expansion? What plans are there, if any, for the future expansion of the cemetery beyond the current grounds?

Future plans call for development of the following gravesites: Section O (2,997 cremain sites), Section P (2,800 columbarium niches), Section M (+/-5 acres yielding 6,450 crypts & 3,496 in-ground cremain sites), Section Y (+/-2 acres yielding 2,500 columbarium niches), Section Z (+/-20 acres yielding 15,900 crypts & 4,960 rough box plots), Section C (+/-1.2 acres yielding 1,800 crypts), Section F (+/-1.5 acres yielding 1,998 cremain sites) and Section G (2,997 cremain sites). Based on current interment rates, 85% of the gravesites will contain two remains (a veteran and his/her spouse) when the cemetery has matured.

Please explain how the expanded operations will bring in over \$11 million of federal funding?

During the past two fiscal years, the Doyle Cemetery received federal funding totaling \$11 million, which included \$6.2 million for construction of the Admin-Maintenance Complex; \$3.8 million for construction of the Section R Crypt Field; and \$1 million for Plot Internment Allowances (PIA). Over the next two years, we anticipate receiving construction grants totaling \$7.5 million and PIA totaling \$1 million.

4b. In addition, the FY 2009 Governor's Budget mentions that the department is currently in the design phase for three new projects: a Public Information Center and Entrance Boulevard, a Public Assembly Area and Columbarium, and a Committal Shelter that are awaiting federal funding of approximately \$10 million. According to the department, the Doyle cemetery needed spending authority for \$8 million in FY 2008 to cover potential awards of federal grants for these projects even though state grant funding from the federal government has been level and has not kept pace with existing needs. The FY 2009 Governor's Budget recommends a \$6 million reduction in federal funding for FY 2009.

• **Questions:** Please explain the reduction in federal funding for the projects above.

State Cemeteries are funded through the Grants to State Cemeteries program within the Veterans Administration Budget. In FY2009, the Veterans Administration determined that their priority was providing funds for new State Cemeteries. As a result many projects at existing State Cemeteries did not receive project funding.

When does the department estimate that the three new projects will finish the design phase and enter the build phase?

Plans for these three projects (Section P Columbarium & Public Assembly Area, Section Z Committal Shelter and Public Information Center & Entrance Boulevard) are 90% complete and are awaiting comments from the State Cemetery Grants Program Office.

When does the department estimate that these projects will be completed?

The Department will be requesting funding authorization for \$7,500,000 in FY2009. This figure represents the current estimate along with a reduction in either the federal funding or the scope of the projects themselves. If Federal funding becomes available the Section P Columbarium & Public Assembly Project will begin during the next federal fiscal year.

5. According to the Department, the cost of the World War II Memorial is estimated to be \$6.1 million. Of that amount, \$2.9 million in additional funding is needed before ground can be broken. To date, the design phase has been completed, construction drawings are in hand and all necessary permits and clearances have been obtained. Fabrication has begun on three bronze sculptures that are an integral part of the memorial. Last year, \$1 million in State funds were appropriated for the memorial. In December 2007, the Governor appointed four new members to the World War II Memorial Commission. The FY 2009 Governor's Budget does not recommend an appropriation for memorial.

• **Questions:** What is the current status of the memorial? Have the total project costs increased since last year? If so, by how much and how much additional funding does the department need to complete the memorial? Have the new commissioners raised any additional funds for the completion of the memorial? What is the expected completion date of the memorial?

On March 24, 2008, the Department of the Treasury has signed a contract with Neshaminy Constructors, Inc., of Feasterville, PA, who won the bid to construct the World War II Memorial. This winning bid came in at \$4,960,000, which is in line with the Department's previous estimates. The Department of the Treasury has advanced the necessary funds to construct the memorial, while the Fundraising Committee is working diligently toward seeking contributions from corporations and private citizens, with \$379,630.71 raised to date. A major event is planned for May 10, 2008, in Atlantic City. The construction work on site has commenced, with a targeted completion date of October 31, 2008 and a dedication slated for Veteran's Day, November 11, 2008.

6. During the FY 2008 budget hearing, inquiries were made regarding the list of prequalified individuals for the newly expanded Veterans Memorial Vineland nursing home. The Old Glory Wing renovation added 68 beds to the Vineland facility in November 2006 but, as of April 2007, about 30 beds remained unfilled. In the months following the hearing, the admission process filled those empty beds and has kept them consistently filled. In fact, each of the three New Jersey nursing homes dedicated to veterans has been close to full capacity (948 beds) for the past six months. The most recent report shows that Menlo Park and Paramus are at 95 percent utilization of available beds, and the Vineland facility is at 98 percent utilization.

• **Questions: What is the department's estimate of the demand for veterans nursing home beds?**

The Department estimates that the current demand for beds will continue at approximate levels through at least 2010. Then they will begin to decline as the World War II era veterans reach normal age limits. Additional detail is given below.

What method is used to estimate demand and what factors have the greatest effect on demand?

The method used to estimate demands are the age and mortality figures provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) for each veteran groupings. It must be noted that even the DVA keeps only very rough approximations of veterans based on census figures. They publish this in the Veteran Population Model (VETPOP); a fact we in the Department found when we did a Home Healthcare Study for the Legislature. The factor that that impacts the most is age and mortality. For instance in 2003 there were approximately 600,000 veterans in the state of New Jersey . There are now 506,000 veteran in the state. Another factor is the willingness of family to retain aged veterans in the home and seek home healthcare alternatives for their loved one. This appears to be gaining in popularity and may be the reason why the VMHs seem to be getting veterans who are older and more frail than in the past.

What is the long term average annual demand for nursing homes given the varying number of New Jersey service personnel who have served in the different wars and the length of time between times of peace and times of war?

It is hard to determine the long term average demand. The Department estimates that demand levels, as mentioned in above, will continue at current levels until at least 2010. We predict a slight decrease for the Korean Era veterans and then a slight rise as Vietnam Era veterans begin to reach the age levels consistent with Long Term Care placement. This is born out if we strictly use age as an indicator, DVA statistics show the following

- 8,431 state veterans over 90 years
- 27,819: 85-89
- 48,815: 80-84
- 57,347: 75-79
- 53,434: 70-74
- 51,930: 65-69
- 72,934: 60-64

- 48,951: 55-59
- 31,668: 50-54

Although there are periods clearly identifies by conflict (e.g. WW II, Korea, etc.) these are not as clearly defined when it comes to our Veteran Home Population. Age grouping are a better indicator for veteran population, which is given below. A good example would be a WW II veteran who enlisted during the last year of WW II (e.g. 17 years old in 1945) compared to a veteran who enlisted at 35 during the first year of the Korean Conflict) Clearly there could be a blending or overlap of veterans within age groups for different conflict periods.

Of those currently living in each of the facilities, which wars do they predominantly represent?

The current population of veterans in the three VMHs are as follows:

WWII	KOREA	VIETNAM	GWOT	PEACE
533	151	65	1	74

Has the Vietnam War veterans population affected the demand for nursing home beds?

As demonstrated from #4 above, not in significant numbers yet. However, the Vietnam conflict spanned the years from 1965 to 1973 so it is expected that their number will begin to increase slowly but steadily in the near future.

Given the trans-generational nature of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and the large number of New Jersey service personnel who will become veterans, how will demand for nursing home beds increase eventually?

We must be careful when we use terms such a large number of GWOT veterans. This is now an all volunteer military and the numbers of those in uniform today represent less than 1% of the nation's population, as opposed to over 12% that were in uniform during World War II. Since it is a volunteer force, many members are serving more than one tour of duty overseas, which would decrease the overall numbers of veterans. In light of the vast numbers of Americans who were called to duty during World War II and their mortality rates as indicated above. Similarly given the length of the Vietnam Conflict we predict fairly high numbers for the future. Again using DVA statistics, currently all veterans between the ages of 18-40 equals 47,552 (for a 22 year age span that would encompass a majority of GWOT veterans) as compared to 205,483 Vietnam Era veterans (50-70 year old - a similar 20 year age span). Given these statistics we feel the Veteran Memorial Homes will be able to handle the influx of GWOT veterans.

• What is the average age of the individuals who seek placement in a veterans nursing home and where are they in their life cycle?

The average age for our veterans is 83 they are generally at the end of their life cycle., see #2 below. We are receiving our veterans at an older rate, it appears that families are holding them as long as possible.

What is the average length of stay in a veterans nursing home?

The average length of stay in our VMHs is approximately three (3) years.

How does an individual become qualified for placement in a veterans nursing home?

N.J.A.C. 5A:5 specifies that applicants to our homes must be veterans, who are in need of Long Term Care. The N.J.A.C. also allows for non-veteran applicants such as veteran spouses, Gold star parents and Gold Star widows/widowers.

6a. The total number of approved individuals waiting for entry into the three nursing homes averages about 200 individuals: 100 for Vineland and 50 each for Menlo Park and Paramus.

• Questions: Historically, what has been the average length of stay on a waiting list for each facility?

Currently, the average stay on a waiting list for our Homes is between 1-2 months but this varying widely depending on demand, the type of applicant and the VMH involved. For instance Menlo Park VMH does not have enough applicants for the Alzheimer/Dementia Wing, so there is no waiting list for this wing. Vineland on the other hand has a current waiting list of 90 veterans and 30 non-veterans. This waiting list will be a little longer.

Of those individuals on the waiting list, are they usually in another long-term care facility, their family's care, or another situation?

Applicants are generally with relatives although some are in other Long Term Care Facilities, however, we do not keep statistics on this. We are also in the process of publishing a guide for veterans which will outline Home Healthcare available to them until they are accepted into one of our VMHs

• How are individuals on the waiting list prioritized for entry into a facility?

Individuals are placed on the waiting list by the date their application is initially received by the respective Veteran memorial Home (VMH) regardless of how long it takes to complete the entire admissions process.

Is it "first come first serve" system or are there mitigating factors that determine placement order?

N.J.A.C. 5A:5 which governs the VMHs does prioritize applicants, so that NJ Veterans receive first priority of placement although considerations must be taken into account. For instance since there are two residents per room, if a female veteran has applied and there is a vacancy in room with a female, she obviously would be placed before males waiting for an opening. The same holds true for Alzheimer/Dementia applicants.

How often do individuals leave the veterans nursing homes waiting list for other arrangements because they are unable to wait for an open bed?

This is difficult to determine, since our policy allows approved applicants who come to the top of the approved list to "defer" meaning they are not feel ready to become a resident. We do not penalize a veteran for this. Their name goes to the bottom of the approved list and begins to work its way back to the top. A resident may "defer" an indefinite amount of times without penalty.

6b. In FY 2008, \$2 million was appropriated for renovations at Ancora Psychiatric Hospital to provide an additional 30 beds for the Veterans Haven program that serves homeless veterans.

• Question: What is the status of the renovations and expected completion date?

The design phase for a 20,000 square foot expansion of our facility at Veterans; Haven is complete and the plans are being submitted for technical review and permitting. We anticipate construction to be completed, and the new facility fully occupied by late 2009 or early 2010.

7. The FY 2009 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction in the number of state employees through an early retirement initiative and workforce reductions. According to the Budget In Brief, the ability to hire new employees to fill these vacant positions will be limited. The impact these personnel actions may have on the department's programs and services is not clear.

• Questions: How many people are eligible for the early retirement initiative, may attrit, or be subject to layoffs by division within the department? To the extent that there will be a backfill limitation on hiring new employees, what services or programs will have to be reduced or eliminated? How will the reductions affect the department's monitoring and oversight of contracts and its efforts to claim for and maximize federal funding?

Based on the assumptions in the budget for the projected \$135.9 million net ERI savings, 56 of Department staff will be eligible for participation. The savings assumes an overall 50% participation rate that varies by Department. The initial proposal is still under discussion and could be refined in the enabling legislation. Regardless, the Governor has stated that the backfills of participants will be limited to 10% on a Statewide basis.

8. The FY 2008 Appropriation Act anticipated savings of \$25 million from management efficiencies. These savings, while reflected in the Interdepartmental Accounts section of the budget, were to be obtained from executive agency appropriations, presumably in direct correlation with identified efficiency improvements.

• **Questions:** Please provide a detailed breakdown showing the allocation of the department's respective management efficiency amount among specific accounts as required under the FY 2008 Appropriations Act. What amount of the department's original FY 2008 appropriation was reallocated to Interdepartmental Accounts as savings from management efficiencies? What specific efficiencies were achieved by the department that correlates to the reallocations? What adverse impacts, if any, on the output and outcomes of the department's programs and services resulted in FY2008? Please provide a detailed description of these adverse impacts.

Below is the detailed breakdown showing the allocation of the department's respective management efficiency amount among specific accounts:

Account Number	Account/Program Name	Reduction (\$000s)	Description
3600-100-600000-12	Joint Training Center Management and Operations	60	Reduction of two funded vacancies
3600-100-990000-12	Administration and Support Services	87	Attrition of one position
3620-100-400000-12	New Jersey National Guard Support Services	351	Conversion of 17 armorers to Federal positions (50%)
3620-100-400000-4	New Jersey National Guard Support Services	20	Reduction of armory maintenance funding
3620-100-402300	Weapons of Mass Destruction 117 Program		Reduction of two funded vacancies
TOTAL EFFICIENCY REDUCTION		635	

Reduction of vacancies not only decreased the department's ability to address existing staffing shortages but negatively impacts the amount of salary program that would be received in following fiscal years to offset salary increments and cost of living increases.

The attrition of one position was an Accounting Bureau Chief retirement. The attrition of the vacant position necessitated the consolidation of three bureaus within the Fiscal Division (accounting, budget and procurement) into two bureaus: budget/procurement and accounting creating the savings of \$87,000. The impact is doing more with less.

The conversion of 17 armorers from state to federal position numbers shifted 50% of the armorer salary costs to federal funding, creating a savings to the State through the maximization of federal resources. One adverse impact is the funding utilized on the federal side for the salary costs normally would have been used to fund operating costs and/or projects.

The funding reduction in the armory maintenance appropriation can back funded with armory rental receipts and therefore has no impact if any.