DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

BUDGET HEARING

BRIG GEN JEMAL J. BEALE
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

FISCAL YEAR 2019
COVER PHOTOS

New Jersey Air National Guardsman Senior Airmen Joshua O’Reilly, crew chief, marshals a 108th Wing KC-135R Stratotanker to its parking spot on the flight line at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Sept. 26, 2017. The tanker and its crew returned from supporting Andersen Air Force Base’s ongoing refueling mission. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Ross A. Whitley) U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Asim Williams, right, places an urn containing the cremains of a veteran while Senior Airmen Joshua Kaemmer, both members of the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery Honor Guard, waits to place an American flag in front of it during the 26th New Jersey Mission of Honor ceremony at the Cemetery at North Hanover Township, N.J., Nov. 30, 2017. The cremains of one World War I veteran, seven World War II veterans, and one Vietnam veteran were honored during the ceremony. NJMOH’S mission is to identify, retrieve, and intern the cremated remains of veterans forgotten in New Jersey funeral homes. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen) New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, provide fire superiority during an air assault raid during the eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise at Fort Pickett, Va., May 27, 2017. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Evan Lane)
Good morning, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs’ Fiscal 2019 budget.

I am honored to be here as a representative of the more than 8,200 Airmen and Soldiers of the New Jersey National Guard, who are always ready to serve, and the DMAVA civilian workforce, which puts the needs of this great state’s 355,000 Veterans first.

DMAVA’s Fiscal Year 2019 proposed budget of $95.5 million represents a one and one-half percent decrease from the budgeted appropriation for Fiscal Year 2018.

Although DMAVA is a relatively small state department in terms of dollars and cents, there is nothing small about our efforts to bring Federal dollars back into the Garden State for the benefit of its Veterans and our economy.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs brings New Jersey hundreds of millions of dollars a year in federal funds through reimbursement of operating expenses of the National Guard and from the federal Veterans Administration entitlements the Department obtains on behalf of our Veterans.
entitles the Department obtains on behalf of our Veterans.
And that doesn’t count the additional millions that flow
into the state as a result of federally-funded construction and
maintenance at National Guard and DMVA facilities.
From the National Guard perspective, the best way to
continue to serve this state and nation – and to contribute
financially – is to maintain the Guard as a strong, viable and
modern force. One way this is done is by ensuring the force
remains robust.

A New Jersey Air National Guard F-16D Fighting Falcon with the 177th
Fighter Wing flies over Warren Grove Gunnery Range Nov. 17, 2017.
(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)

Our Air National Guard is currently at 107 percent strength
and our Army Guard is at 97 percent.
In Fiscal Year 2017, the Army Guard received $142.5
million for operations, maintenance and salaries for its
traditional drilling Soldiers and its military technician force,
a nearly a seven percent increase from the previous year. It
received an additional $50 million in salaries for its Active
Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers. The Air Guard received
$97 million for Fiscal Year 2017, a nine percent decrease
from the previous year, for operations and maintenance and
to pay its traditional drilling Airmen and military technician
force. The Air Guard also received $30 million for salaries
for its AGR Airmen.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, nearly 19,000
New Jersey National Guard members have been mobilized
in support of overseas contingency operations, some of
them, several times.
But even as our National Guard continues to safeguard
the security of this nation by providing combat-ready forces,
it is also been the glue that has held New Jersey communities
together during some of this state’s darkest hours, from
Hurricane Irene to Superstorm Sandy.
During the most recent Atlantic hurricane season, New
Jersey National Guard military first responders provided aid
and relief to their fellow Americans in Texas, Florida, the
Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.
The Soldiers and Airmen who participated in these
missions were all volunteers. They put their lives on hold to
help people in desperate need. Those volunteers tell us a lot
about the kind of people who serve in the National Guard.
But the willingness of Soldiers and Airmen to serve
must be matched by their leadership team’s willingness
to create opportunities that allow everyone to serve at
ever increasing levels of responsibility, regardless of race,
gender, or orientation. That mindset has cleared the way for
a number of women to achieve firsts. In February, Dr. Lisa
Hou, an Army National Guard Colonel and a veteran of both
Iraq and Afghanistan, became DMVA’s first female Deputy
Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. In March, Michele Thomas
became the first woman to serve as the State Command Chief
Warrant Officer of the New Jersey National Guard. The list
of firsts goes on and in many cases reflects the New Jersey
National Guard’s aggressive push to follow the active duty
Army as it opens every position to women, to include service

The Regional Training Institute at the National Guard Training Center,
Sea Girt, N.J., April 3, 2017. The nearly $31-million dollar military
construction project includes 10 state-of-the-art classrooms, an
auditorium with seating for 225 students and 72 lodging rooms in the
86,000 square foot building. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen)
as combat engineers and as the leaders of infantry platoons.

The New Jersey National Guard leadership team also understands that our Soldiers and Airmen need the tools and the infrastructure that allows them to train to the highest standards.

The Army National Guard has completed several federally funded Military Construction projects at our Sea Girt National Guard Training Center in recent years. The crown jewel is the $34 million dollar Regional Training Institute which is a state of the art facility designed to provide leadership and military occupational skill training for military Soldiers. It includes administrative space for the 254th Regiment a 200-seat auditorium, 10 classrooms and a billeting building that provides hotel-like accommodations for about 120 students attending training at the campus. The facility will also be available to host training events for other state, federal and local government agencies on a cost reimbursable basis.

Vineland was also included in the President’s Budget for execution in Fiscal Year 2023.

There are also two Air National Guard military construction projects underway. The first is a $9.9 million fuel cell and corrosion hanger at the 177th Fighter Wing. Wing’s headquarters at Atlantic City International Airport. The new facility will replace two separate buildings that were drastically undersized, an upgrade that will reduce aircraft maintenance times and improve worker safety. Safety will also be enhanced by the replacement of the 40-year-old control tower at the Wing’s Warren Grove Guntery Range. The new tower will cost $950,000.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs continues to be a leader in the use of alternative energy to reduce costs and create a healthier planet.

Alternative energy and conservation has allowed DMAVA to avoid approximately $2 million in electrical utility costs since 2009. In Fiscal Year 2017, the Department’s alternative energy projects generated 2.5 million kilowatt hours of electricity for a cost avoidance of nearly $320,000.

A number of other federally funded construction projects are either completed or are nearing completion at Sea Girt that were funded thru the Disaster Appropriations Act of 2013. Two projects that are completed are infrastructure improvements totaling $4 million which replaced the telecommunications duct bank and a power plant building that will ultimately allow the National Guard Training Center to operate independently from the electrical grid. A $9 million Medical Clinic and instruction building is about 90 percent completed, with an expected opening in the summer of 2018. This will provide the Army Guard medical staff with their own center to assure the Army Guard maintains the highest levels of medical readiness for deployments. A $6 million contract is also underway for a maintenance facility on the installation to support both the military equipment and the post engineering support required to keep this busy camp running.

The Army Guard is also preparing for two new projects that are on the federal future year’s defense plan for construction. In the federal Fiscal Year 2019 we will receive design funding to start award a design contract for the FY 21 15 million dollar Readiness Center that will be built Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. A new $18 million Field maintenance Shop for
Anthony Lowman of the Rowan College of Engineering has recognized the NJDMAVA internship program as an important driving factor in the establishment of a Sustainable Facilities Center at Rowan University.

DMAVA has an established track record of joining in partnerships to benefit Veterans. Some of these have been with other government agencies, such as the New Jersey Department of Labor and other entities that provide employment opportunities for Veterans, from job fairs to programs such as Helmets to Hard Hats. The Department is ready to expand on those partnerships and others in the future.

Meanwhile, the Department’s connection with the state’s Veterans community, which is one of the most vibrant and active in the nation, gets stronger every year.

Partnerships with the Veterans community have led to volunteer efforts that have comforted the residents of our three Veterans Memorial Homes in Paramus, Menlo Park, and Vineland and given strength to the residents of Veterans Haven-North and Veterans Haven-South, the Department’s transitional housing programs.

Veterans have logged nearly 90,000 volunteer hours at the Homes and have served their fellow Veterans by doing everything from organizing bus trips to running bingo games to career counseling to just being there to lend an ear to someone who also wore our nation’s uniform.

These volunteer hours help DMAVA do more – and do better – with less. These volunteer hours equal a staff manpower savings of nearly $2.5 million in salaries. On top of that, these volunteers have also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of goods and services.

As I said in my introduction, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is small, but it has an outsized impact on the Garden State economy.

For evidence of this, look no further than DDMVA’s Veterans Service Officers. From 16 offices covering every New Jersey county, the VSO’s primary job is to ensure that every Veteran in our state gets all the federal entitlements he or she has earned through their service.

The DDMVA Veterans Service Officers continue to secure an outsized amount of federal Veterans Administration benefits for New Jersey Veterans. Over the past year, the VSO staff, which numbers 17, made contact with nearly 36,000 Veterans and opened more than 9,700 VA claims. This work resulted in our state’s Veterans receiving more than $63 million in initial awards of VA entitlements. Overall, New Jersey Veterans received more than $166 million in entitlements in 2017 thanks to the work of DDMVA VSOs. The majority – 85 percent of that money went to New Jersey Veterans for compensation for Service Connected ailments, which run from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, to Traumatic Brain Injury, to Agent Orange Exposure to hearing loss.

The Department’s three Veterans Memorial Homes in Menlo Park, Paramus and Vineland provide quality, compassionate long-term skilled nursing care to 948 Veterans, spouses and Gold Star family members annually. In addition to state appropriations of $78 million, the Homes leverage nearly $11 million in federal Medicare funds to offset operating costs.

Furthermore, collections of federal Veterans Administration

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per diem and resident contributions are deposited directly into the State’s General Fund. Although not credited directly to the Homes, the receipts should be considered as offsets to Direct State Aid. In the past few Fiscal Years, the Homes receipts have returned in excess of two thirds of state appropriations - almost $50 million - directly to the Treasury. A similar result is anticipated for Fiscal Year 2019.

Services to our veterans extends beyond their daily lives. As our veterans pass on, many find their final resting place at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle cemetery.

The cemetery in North Hanover Township, has a rated capacity of 171,000 remains and continues to be the busiest state cemetery in the country, with more than 3,100 interments in FY 2017. There have been 71,035 interments of Veterans and their spouses since the facility opened. More than 25,000 veterans are already pre-registered.

The operations costs for Vets Haven-South were $2.3 million, of which $963,000 was appropriated. The balance is provided by the U.S. Veterans Administration’s Grant Per Diem Program (GPD). The operational costs for Vets Haven-North were $1.9 million, of which $1.1 million was appropriated. Vets Haven-North has applied to the GDP to cover that shortfall.

The New Jersey National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy, located on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, remains an innovative and cost-effective partnership between the state and federal governments.

The voluntary educational program provides at-risk 16- to 18-year-old youth the opportunity to undergo an intense 22-week structured residential program in a quasi-military environment. The educational goal is to prepare cadets for the GED exam and raise math and reading scores a minimum of two grade levels. The program has a return on investment.
I am proud to report that New Jersey is committed to providing them a helping hand and remains one of only seven states that provides additional mental health services for its Veterans and is the only state to assist their families as well. A cornerstone of this effort is our toll free, 24-hour Veterans Helpline. Helpline calls have more than doubled since its inception in 2006. There were more than 3,914 calls received and more than 8,200 outgoing calls to Veterans in need from the staff.

unmatched among similar organizations.

Since 2008, there have been 1,883 Youth ChalleNGe graduates and 63 percent earned their high school diploma. Upon graduation, cadets went on to continue their education, entered the workforce and joined the military. Those classes of Youth ChalleNGe cadets provided 112,031 hours of community service for government agencies and nonprofit organizations ranging from New Jersey Forestry Services to Monmouth Battlefield State Park to the New Jersey Community Food Bank of South Jersey. The monetary value of the services they provided exceeds $3 million.

In Fiscal Year 2017, the federal government paid for 75 percent of the ChalleNGe program's operating costs, or $2.7 million, and the state of New Jersey accounted for the remaining $900,000 in program expenses.

It is incumbent upon the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to ensure that as our National Guard members mobilize, deploy, demobilize, and transition back to civilian life, their needs and the needs of their families continue to be met.

Through National Guard funding, DMAVA operates a statewide network of Family Assistance Centers. These centers support the families of deployed Soldiers and Airmen during unforeseen emergencies and financial hardships. Staff at the centers work in tandem with the dedicated volunteers at the unit-affiliated Family Readiness Groups across the state. Our dedicated team of chaplains lends additional support.

From the moment they step off the plane from a deployment, Soldiers and Airmen are the focus of a reintegration process designed to reconnect them with their families, smooth the return to their civilian jobs, address any financial concerns that have arisen during their absence, educate them about the benefits to which they are now entitled, and ensure that their physical, mental, and spiritual needs are being met.

The National Guard Bureau has recognized DMAVA's effort to assist Soldiers and Airmen as they transition from active duty mobilizations to part-time service as one of the nation's 'best practices.'

DMAVA continues to assist a number of Veterans seeking treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In Fiscal Year 2017, there were 10,988 individual counseling sessions and 7,068 group counseling sessions.

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Based on the high volume of calls to the 24-hour helpline, the Vet2Vet Helpline has proven a positive and effective means to mitigate potentially life-threatening issues for service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those suffering ill effects from service in earlier conflicts.

As you can see, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs makes New Jersey a stronger place. The Department cares for Veterans, our Troops, and our state in its times of need. This happens because of the dedication of our uniformed military force and our civilian employees. They come to work every day with the mission as their priority, whether their mission is helping an aging Veteran at one of our Homes, or making a last minute check of young Soldiers and Airmen as they respond to a domestic crisis. They are DMAVA.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation before your distinguished committee. My staff and I will be happy to answer any of your questions.
BACK COVER PHOTOS

Top row, left to right: Staff Sgt. Melissa A. Seel, an aerospace medical technician with the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, checks a homeless veteran's blood pressure during Stand Down 2017 at the All Wars Memorial Building in Atlantic City, N.J., May 17, 2017. Airmen from both the 108th Wing and 177th Fighter Wing volunteered at the Stand Down. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs along with other federal agencies, veterans' organizations, and other relief agencies co-hosted the Stand Down providing more than 100 homeless veterans with access to healthcare, mental health screening, substance abuse counseling, social services - food stamps and unemployment, legal services, religious counseling, a hot meal, and clothing. Stand Downs are grass roots, community-based assistance programs to help veterans' battle life on the streets and serve as a catalyst that enables homeless veterans to re-enter mainstream society. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen) Members of Korean War veterans groups participate in the wreath presentation during the ceremony commemorating the 64th anniversary of the armistice signing at the New Jersey Korean War Veterans Memorial in Atlantic City, N.J., July 27, 2017. The New Jersey Korean War Veterans Memorial was created to ensure that future generations remember and honor the pride and dedication of those who served and the freedom they preserved. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen) Soldiers with A Battery, 3-112th Field Artillery, New Jersey Army National Guard, fire M19A3 howitzers for a 19-gun salute during New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's inauguration ceremony Jan. 16, 2018. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen)

Second row, left to right: Sixty-eight Soldiers from the New Jersey Army National Guard's 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team loaded more than 170 tactical vehicles onto rail cars at Morrisville Yard in Morrisville, N.J., May 2, 2017. A total of 700 vehicles and trailers are headed to Fort Pickett, Va., for the Army National Guard's eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise 17-01. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht) A New Jersey Air National Guard F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 177th Fighter Wing takes off for a mission during a three-day Aerospace Control Alert CrossTell live-fly training exercise at Atlantic City Air National Guard Base, N.J., May 24, 2017. Representatives from the Air National Guard fighter wings, Civil Air Patrol, and U.S. Coast Guard rotary-wing air intercept units will conduct daily sorties from May 23-25 to hone their skills with tactical-level air-intercept procedures. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht) Scouts of all kinds: Boy, Girl, Cub, and even Brownies, placed flags on every grave at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery, Hanover, N.J., May 26, 2017, the day before the state Memorial Day Ceremony. (NJDMAVA photo by Kryn Westhoven)

Third row, left to right: Korean War veterans look for names of fallen friends at the New Jersey Korean War Veterans Memorial in Atlantic City, N.J., July 27, 2017. The New Jersey Korean War Veterans Memorial was created to ensure that future generations remember and honor the pride and dedication of those who served and the freedom they preserved. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen) Pfc. Michael Thomas, 253rd Transportation Company, climbs into a light medium tactical vehicle as more than 130 New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers at Cape May Courthouse, N.J., deploy to support the Florida National Guard in anticipation of Hurricane Irma Sept. 8, 2017. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen) New Jersey Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Robert Cento pulls red tags during pre-flight checks on a 108th Wing KC-135R Stratotanker prior to a training flight on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Jan. 11, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)

Fourth row, left to right: A KC-135 Stratotanker from the New Jersey Air National Guard's 108th Wing sits on the flight line at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 22, 2017. The KC-135R is decorated in a special tiger configuration celebrating the 141st's 100th Anniversary. The unit traces its tiger logo to Capt. Hobey Baker, a former 141st Aero Squadron Commander in World War I, who played hockey and football for the Princeton Tigers. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht) Residents of the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland, N.J., open gifts during the Second Winds Dreams event Dec. 20, 2017. This is the seventh year that the Second Winds Dreams Organization and the Vineland Bosco's department store have treated the Home's residents to an early Christmas. Each year, residents write what gift they want on a tag, which is then hung on a Christmas tree in Bosco's. Shoppers and employees then chose a tag and purchase the gift, which is then wrapped by the Bosco's staff before delivering them to the home where Vineland staff members, volunteers and Bosco's employees distribute the gifts to the residents. Additionally, the Harrah's Foundation supports the Second Wind Dreams program for the Home. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen) A tactical control party airmen from the 227th Air Support Operations Squadron descend from a 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during joint training for New Jersey Task Force One at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 28, 2017. The primary mission of New Jersey Task Force One is to provide advanced technical search and rescue capabilities to victims trapped or entombed in structurally collapsed buildings. Task Force One is made up of New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, as well as civilians. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)