DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 2026

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The State Veterans Day ceremony at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, Holmdel. Photo: Mark C. Olsen, New Jersey National Guard, via DVIDS.

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FROM THE ADJUTANT'S DESK

Joshua R. Jude, Department Adjutant

Welcome to the November 2026 edition of the Department of New Jersey newsletter. November is Veterans Day month, and this issue is built around it: the Department presents its wreath at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on November 11, we join the Northern NJ Stand Down in Newark on November 14, and the Department Executive Committee meets on November 21. Inside you will also find the launch of the 2026–27 Charles Kosmutza Scholarship, the holiday toy drive, and the dates your chapter needs on its calendar.

Two dates need your attention first. Written line officer reports for the November 21 DEC are due to Headquarters no later than Wednesday, November 18 — floor time at the DEC is for highlights, and your complete reports will reach every chapter through the official minutes and this newsletter. And line officers may claim a department laptop on hand receipt through Friday, November 6; any unit unclaimed will be raffled at the November 21 DEC to chapters with an active Chapter Service Officer, putting it to work on field claims.

One more note from last month: at the Homeless Veterans Summit roundtable at the Trenton Vet Center on October 21, I challenged every agency at the table to stop waiting for veterans to reach a crisis and start reaching veterans first. Prevention over desperation — that is the standard.

As always, my door is open. Call Headquarters at (609) 396-2885 or email adjutant@davnj.org.

Respectfully,

Joshua R. Jude

Department Adjutant

COMMANDER'S CORNER

Diana Czerepuszko, Department Commander



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

— HELEN KELLER

Department Commander Diana Czerepuszko.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Recent Activities



Members and guests at a Department gathering.

- Welcome, Genesis Chapter 94: The Department's newest chapter — Genesis Chapter 94 of Winslow, serving Camden County — launched its Facebook Page in October and is already at work for disabled veterans in its community. Welcome aboard, 94.
- Homeless Veterans Summit: Department leadership joined the Homeless Veterans Summit roundtable at the Trenton Vet Center on October 21, pressing partner agencies to reach veterans before they are in crisis, not after.
- Scholarship packets on the move: Headquarters is emailing the 2026–27 Kosmutza Scholarship packet to guidance counselors at high schools across New Jersey. See the feature in this issue — and find the eligible seniors in your own chapter.
- Laptops for the field: Line officers may claim a department laptop on hand receipt through Friday, November 6. Any unit unclaimed will be raffled at the November 21 DEC to chapters with an active Chapter Service Officer, putting it to work on field claims.
- Veterans Day week: The Department presents its wreath at the NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on November 11 and joins the Northern NJ Stand Down in Newark on November 14. Details in this issue.
- Department social media: Follow @davnewjersey on Instagram and find the Department of New Jersey on LinkedIn for news, photos, and updates between newsletters.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Chapter 66 — Hammonton

This month's spotlight is on Scaltrito-Castone Chapter 66 of Hammonton. The photographs here come from a recent chapter meeting — a full hall of members in covers, gathered under the Chapter 66 emblem on the wall. That is what an active chapter looks like.



A full hall at a recent Chapter 66 meeting in Hammonton — the Chapter 66 emblem on the wall.





Photos: Larry Adair, Chapter 66.

Chapter 66's DAV Auxiliary hosts Vets-Giving on Saturday, November 14, 2026, at 2:00 PM in Hammonton — $20 for adults, $10 for kids, with food, games, and raffle baskets. A donated meal is available for any veteran, family member, or caregiver who needs one, provided by Coffee with a Vet and the Women's Veterans Committee & Caregivers; to arrange one, contact Terri Lazzaro-Scott or Jen Alvarado privately.

Looking ahead: the Chapter 66 Christmas Party is Wednesday, December 9, 2026, from 7:00 to 11:00 PM at Brigalia's Villa Manor, 55 Hall Street, Hammonton, NJ 08037 (attached to Winslow Fire House

#1). The party is free for members, a plus-one, and invited guests; members reserve through the chapter's sign-up form.

CHARLES KOSMUTZA SCHOLARSHIP

Applications Open — 2026–27 Cycle

The Department has opened the 2026–27 Charles Kosmutza Scholarship cycle. Three scholarships of $1,000 each will be awarded — one to a graduating senior in each of our three districts: Northern, Central, and Southern New Jersey.

This year's essay topic: "A veteran who changed my life." Tell the story of a veteran who influenced who you are today, and what their example taught you.

Eligibility: applicants must be New Jersey residents and natural or adopted descendants of a member of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of New Jersey — sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, nieces, and nephews — graduating in the 2026–27 school year.

Deadline: Friday, May 14, 2027, by 3:00 PM.

District chairs: Northern District — Debbie Hamilton-Clax; Central District — Anthony Stradford; Southern District — Donald Walls.

Headquarters is sending the application packet to guidance counselors at high schools across the state. Chapters: this scholarship belongs to the descendants of our own members. Find the eligible students in your chapter and put an application in their hands personally, before Christmas break. Route questions through your district chair.

VETERANS DAY & THE STAND DOWN

Wednesday, November 11 — Holmdel

The Department will take part in the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation's annual Veterans Day Ceremony at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, November 11, at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, 1 Memorial Lane, Holmdel. Commander Diana Czerepuszko will present the Department's wreath — a new wreath, ordered for this year's ceremony — and the Department will be announced as the Disabled American Veterans, Department of New Jersey. Chapters are encouraged to attend, and to mark the day in their own communities.



That evening, Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Night honors veterans across the country.

Saturday, November 14 — Northern NJ Stand Down, Newark

Billed as the largest Stand Down in New Jersey: Saturday, November 14, 9:00 AM–2:00 PM, JFK Recreation Center, 211 West Kinney Street, Newark. Services include VA health care and benefits help, housing and legal support, medical screenings, and mental-health resources. Bring your DD214; Reservists and National Guard members are welcome. Lunch is free for attendees, vendors, and volunteers, and transportation is available from select locations. Contacts: David Pearson, (973) 818-3601; AJ Luna, (201) 431-6240.

NJ WOMEN WHO SERVED EXHIBIT

Submissions Close November 13

Submissions for the NJ Women Who Served Exhibit close Friday, November 13, 2026. The exhibit runs January 11 through February 11, 2027, at Atlantic Cape Community College, 5100 Black Horse Pike, Mays Landing, with a grand opening on Monday, January 11, 2027, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.

Women veterans who served — and the chapters that know them — should get submissions in before the deadline. Submission form: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/kiK5uhZN78 — questions: njwomenvetsexhibit@gmail.com.

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Gifts Due by December 7

A holiday toy drive is underway in Passaic, collecting a gift for a girl and a gift for a boy — and gift cards are welcome for teens. The deadline is Monday, December 7, 2026. Drop-off: 135 Summer Street, Passaic, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Questions: text Sherese Alston at (201) 957-6681.



CHAPTERS IN NOVEMBER

Chapter News & Dates

- Chapter 58, Vineland: A full November in Cumberland County — a Doughnut Social at the Vineland Veterans Home on Thursday, November 5 (9:30–11:00 AM); a Forget-Me-Not Drive at the ShopRite on Landis Avenue on Saturday, November 7 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM); the YMCA Veterans Day Breakfast on Wednesday, November 11 (9:00–10:30 AM — register at the YMCA), followed by the Veterans Day Ceremony at Landis Park at 11:00 AM; a chapter breakfast at the Golden Palace on Monday, November 16 (10:30 AM); and the monthly meeting at the Vineland Veterans Home on Thursday, November 19 (7:00 PM).
- Chapter 24, Toms River: Ocean County Memorial Chapter 24 meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at 2025 Church Road, Toms River.
- Chapter 20, Brick: Chapter 20 put the word out to its members on New Jersey's Veterans/Active Military Hunting Days — October 31, 2026, and February 6, 2027.

DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

From the Department Executive Committee

Recent department business:

- Annual Financial Reports: The Department submitted its AFR three days ahead of the deadline, and organized, discrepancy-free books saved the Department roughly $2,000 in CPA audit fees compared to last year. Of the 31 chapters that file AFRs, 29 have filed and received formal approval from National Headquarters. Headquarters is working directly with the remaining chapters to close theirs out.
- Mileage and vouchers: Effective immediately, the department mileage reimbursement rate is $0.76 per mile. All expense vouchers must be submitted within 30 days of the expenditure. Standard mileage vouchers do not require receipts when corroborated by chapter sign-in logs or meeting attendance records; receipts are required for non-mileage expenses.
- Leaves of absence — the 90-day rule: Under DAV rules and Robert's Rules of Order, an officer who cannot perform the duties of office for 90 days or less may request a formal leave of absence, approved by the Commander and the DEC, which preserves the office. An absence longer than 90 days cannot be covered by a leave of absence and vacates the office automatically. Put leave requests in writing early.
- Next DEC meeting — Saturday, November 21, 2026: 9:30 AM at Department Headquarters, 171 Jersey St., Bldg. #5, Trenton. Written line officer reports are due to Headquarters no later than Wednesday, November 18, so floor time stays brief and the complete reports reach every chapter through the official minutes and this newsletter.
- 2026–2027 DEC Saturday schedule: November 21, 2026; January 16, 2027 (legislative updates); March 20, 2027 (scholarship selection).
- Chapter inspections: All chapters due this cycle will be notified by the November 21 DEC, scheduled by the January DEC, and fully inspected by the March DEC.
- 2027 Department Convention — June 13–16, 2027, Wildwoods Convention Center: The Convention Committee meets Friday, November 13 at 11:00 AM, and the Department's Convention Questionnaire was submitted to DAV National ahead of the November 1 deadline.
- New Jersey DAV Foundation: Headquarters and the Foundation Committee are completing a review of the Foundation's governing documents to confirm everything is in order and up to date.

VA & NATIONAL NEWS

2027 disability pay: COLA set at 3.6%

The 2027 cost-of-living adjustment for VA disability compensation has been announced at 3.6 percent — the largest increase in three years. The legislation that would make the VA COLA automatic (H.R. 8552 / S. 4487) remains pending in Congress.

H.R. 6047 passes the House

H.R. 6047 — which would add $833.33 per month for severely disabled veterans receiving Aid and Attendance, plus a larger COLA for DIC recipients — passed the House on May 21, 2026, and awaits Senate action.

Cumberland Farms supports DAV through November

Through November 30, register donations at roughly 1,500 Cumberland Farms stores support DAV, with a $150,000 minimum guaranteed nationwide; proceeds support state departments with participating locations.

Cycle Gear gives back, November 2–11

Cycle Gear is donating $3 from every online order to DAV through November 11, and its Bike Night on November 10 adds a match of up to $3,000.

DAV 5K — November 7, and virtual November 7–11

National's DAV 5K runs in Cincinnati on Saturday, November 7, with virtual participation open November 7–11 for members who want to take part from New Jersey.

PENDING VETERANS LEGISLATION

From the Department's legislative watch, as of November 3, 2026:

- SCR96 (veteran property-tax deduction): Reported favorably by Senate Budget & Appropriations, 12–0, on October 5. It would phase the deduction from $1,000 in tax year 2028 to $2,500 by tax year 2031. A public hearing is required before any floor vote; none had been scheduled at press time. Its Assembly companion, ACR129, remains in Assembly Military & Veterans' Affairs.
- A1887 / S4731 (definition of veteran): A1887 was reported out of Assembly Military & Veterans' Affairs on September 14, 2026; its Senate companion, S4731, was introduced October 5, 2026.
- A1488 / S153 (retroactivity of the disabled veterans' property-tax exemption) and S3966 (State reimbursement to municipalities): Awaiting committee action.
- A4172 (renter credit): Would create a refundable income-tax credit for 100% totally and permanently disabled veteran renters, equal to the rent constituting property taxes. In Assembly Military & Veterans' Affairs; no Senate companion.
- Federal: H.R. 8552 / S. 4487, the VA COLA Act, remains pending in Congress (see VA & National News).

VOLUNTEER HOURS (LVAP)

A reminder that a maximum of 10 hours per day can be claimed, including travel time to and from events. Please report all of your volunteer hours — time given in service to veterans is how this Department proves its reach.

Report chapter hours on your chapter's LVAP report. Department officers file the separate Department LVAP Worksheet with Senior Vice Commander Crute, the Department LVAP Coordinator. Updated chapter standings will be published in the December edition, once the September and October department reports are filed ahead of the November 21 DEC.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2026 — Veteran Events Across New Jersey

• Nov 6 — Deadline: line officers claim a department laptop by hand receipt, Department HQ, Trenton.

• Nov 7 — DAV 5K, Cincinnati; virtual participation runs Nov 7–11.

• Nov 9 — Veterans Center of Hoboken groundbreaking, 2:00 PM, 308 2nd St., Hoboken (18 homes for homeless veterans).

• Nov 10 — Cycle Gear Bike Night benefiting DAV.

• Nov 11 — Veterans Day. NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation Ceremony, 11:00 AM, NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, 1 Memorial Ln., Holmdel — Commander Czerepuszko presents the Department's wreath. Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night.

• Nov 12 — "Give Back: Coffee with Veterans" honoring female veterans, 2–3 PM, Westwood.

• Nov 13 — NJ Women Who Served Exhibit submissions close. Department Convention Committee meeting, 11:00 AM.

• Nov 14 — Northern NJ Veterans Stand Down, 9:00 AM–2:00 PM, JFK Recreation Center, 211 W. Kinney St., Newark.

• Nov 14 — Vets-Giving, hosted by DAV Auxiliary Unit 66, 2:00 PM, Hammonton (see Chapter Spotlight).

• Nov 18 — Written line officer reports due to Headquarters for the DEC.

• Nov 20 — Operation Sisterhood: Crafts & Comradery, 6:30–8:30 PM, YWCA Northern NJ, Clifton.

• Nov 21 — Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting, 9:30 AM, Department HQ, 171 Jersey St., Bldg. #5, Trenton.

• Nov 26 — Thanksgiving.

• All month — Women Veterans Bootcamp (South Jersey), The Hopkins House, Haddon Township (runs through Dec 14).

• Looking ahead — Dec 7: Holiday Toy Drive deadline, drop-off 135 Summer St., Passaic.

• Looking ahead — Dec 9: Chapter 66 Christmas Party, 7:00–11:00 PM, Brigalia's Villa Manor, Hammonton.

Know of a veteran event we missed? Email adjutant@davnj.org and we'll add it to next month's calendar.

WOMEN VETERAN EVENTS

November 2026

• Nov 12 — "Give Back: Coffee with Veterans" honoring female veterans, 2–3 PM, Westwood.

• Nov 13 — NJ Women Who Served Exhibit submissions close (see the feature in this issue).

• Nov 20 — Operation Sisterhood: Crafts & Comradery, 6:30–8:30 PM, YWCA Northern NJ, Clifton — free monthly gathering (3rd Fridays).

• Through Dec 14 — Women Veterans Bootcamp (South Jersey), The Hopkins House, Haddon Township — fitness & camaraderie, free.

• Save the date — Jan 11, 2027: NJ Women Who Served Exhibit grand opening, 5:30–7:30 PM, Atlantic Cape Community College, Mays Landing.