



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
POST OFFICE BOX 340
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0340

PHILIP D. MURPHY
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TAHESHA L. WAY
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LISA J. HOU, D.O.
Major General
The Adjutant General

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Contact: MAJ Amelia Thatcher
amelia.c.thatcher.mil@army.mil

New Jersey Citizen-Soldiers put medical skills to the test

TRENTON, N.J. – Earlier this year, more than 1,800 Soldiers of the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New Jersey Army National Guard, deployed to the Middle East in support of U.S. Central Command operations. In less than a month since arriving to theater, their civilian skills and military training have made all the difference.

Sgt. Lauren Shalabi, logistics specialist, 250th Brigade Support Battalion pulled a local Syrian worker from a generator and immediately rendered aid, saving his arm and his ability to work.

Lt. Col. Karl Coutinho, brigade surgeon, 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and a coalition team conducted a complex emergency surgery for a U.S. service member.

Shalabi, a Jersey City police officer, and Coutinho, a practicing physician in Millburn, both credited their extensive civilian and military training.

“I am beyond proud of Sgt. Shalabi and Lt. Col. Coutinho,” said Maj. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., The Adjutant General of New Jersey. “Years of training and preparation have led to these moments, and the New Jersey Army National Guard rose to the occasion. They are the very best of us; the reflexive instinct to save lives exemplifies the reason we serve our state and nation. I continue to expect nothing but the best from our Citizen-Soldiers.”

Read the full stories here:

[NJ Guardsman's prompt response saves arm of local contractor in Syria](#)
[OIR Coalition medical team performs rare emergency surgery](#)