
Fleet Spotlight: Port Authority's Jennifer Long

By Keith T. Kerman & Destiny Fierro



Today, we shine a spotlight on Jennifer Marie Long, a distinguished leader whose career spans military service, public-sector leadership, and transformative advocacy for the transgender community. Her journey exemplifies perseverance, service, and authenticity.

Jennifer currently serves as Deputy Director of Operations Services at the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. She has been working there for three years. She runs five functional areas for operational services including fleet and automotive, seven shops with over 3,000 pieces of fleet equipment. Other operational services include general administration, cafeteria services, office

space and property management, and facility construction. Jennifer also manages the Port Authority sign shop, radio and telecommunications, and finally bridge painters.

In addition to managing operational areas on a day-to-day basis, she and her team at the Port Authority are working on numerous sustainability projects, including electric vehicle initiatives, renewable diesel and other emerging alternative fuels, sustainable garage operations, soy-based tires, battery charging systems, and developing, installing, and managing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the Port district.

Jennifer and her colleagues at the Port Authority have become important partners to DCAS in pursuing and advocating for green fleet approaches. The Port Authority now hosts its own fleet show in New Jersey the day before the DCAS Fleet Show, which is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2026 at Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens.

Jennifer's story, however, goes well beyond fleet, operational, and sustainability management, to one of leadership and service in our nation's armed forces and equal courage as a transgender veteran.



When Jennifer first began her military career, she served under the name Edward Long, a reality that required her to conceal her true identity for decades. As she rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army, ultimately achieving the esteemed

position of Sergeant Major, Jennifer faced not only the challenges of combat and leadership but also the personal struggle of living each day as someone she was not.

She served in the military nearly 30 years, from 1983 to 2012 and with combat tours in Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In Desert Storm, she led a 6 man reconnaissance team forward of friendly lines. In Iraq, she served as Chief of Security of the 3rd largest base. In Afghanistan, she was Combat Advisor to the French Military in the Northern Provinces.

Following the days after 9/11, Jennifer was mobilized as a member of the New Jersey National Guard and her assignment was to establish and maintain security of the Holland Tunnel. Her unit also volunteered to work directly at the Trade Center site during that first year. Not long after, Jennifer was assigned to the Guantanamo Bay in Cuba to work at the Detention Center as a Platoon Commander.

During her 30-year military career, authenticity was a silent battle. Hiding her true identity behind the uniform. The military's restrictions at the time meant that being open about her identity would lead to discrimination and the end of her service. Yet even under all that pressure, Jennifer served with courage and dedication, earning honors such as the Bronze Star Medal for combat action, and the French National Defense Medal, the first American Soldier to receive that honor from the French since WWII.

While still serving in the U.S. Army, Jennifer began the personal journey of transitioning, becoming one of the few service members to navigate that process within a military culture that was unwilling and unprepared to support it. She was forced to leave her military career when she was outed sooner than she would have liked.

She attended Fairleigh Dickinson University to complete her degree in finance and finalize the legal aspects of her transition. In May 2012, she legally changed her name to Jennifer Marie Long. Finally, she was happy and relieved to embrace her true identity.

To herself and everyone around her, she was Jennifer, but she had to explain her personal situation to everyone because of her DD214 form. The Department of Defense Form 214 (DD214) is one of the most important documents a veteran receives upon leaving the military. It's an official record of a veteran's service, including their name, rank, dates of service, and discharge status. Veterans use it for everything from job applications and veteran affairs benefits to mortgage loans and burial honors.

For transgender veterans like Jennifer, the DD214 became a painful reminder of a past identity. The Department of Defense historically refused to change the name or gender on a DD214 after discharge, even if a veteran had legally changed their name and gender.

This policy forced many transgender veterans to out themselves involuntarily every time they presented the form—at job interviews, at the Veterans Affairs office, or when applying for government services. It exposed them to discrimination, harassment, or the invalidation of their gender identity, and it caused emotional distress for those trying to move forward with their lives.

Jennifer was the first veteran to successfully challenge this policy, with the support of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Jersey. Her case set a precedent for allowing corrected DD214 forms to reflect a veteran's true identity.

Jennifer has become an activist and an inspiration in the trans community. She held the office of Post Commander for her local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1302 and VFW District 3 Commander in Hudson County. She served in that role for 11 years, making her the first female commander of the post in its nearly 100-year history. She worked with the National Association of Financial Advisors (NAIFA) as the Vice President of Government Relations for NAIFA-NJ (New Jersey).



In November 2017, Jennifer was selected by New Jersey Governor Murphy to serve as Co-Chair of the Veterans and Military Affairs Transition Team. She was primarily responsible for assessing the challenges facing New Jersey's veterans and military community and for developing recommendations for the incoming Murphy administration to address them.

Jennifer told us about the first time she met her mother as herself. She was nervous and scared of how her mother would react to seeing Jennifer for the first time. Their very intimate conversation about Jennifer's true identity brought them closer than ever. Her mother gifted her a diamond necklace that belonged to Jennifer's grandma. She still wears it to this day. The support of her mother gave Jennifer even more confidence in her decision. Their relationship only improved. So much so that Jennifer's mother wanted Jennifer to choose her first name,

Marie, as her middle name. These moments at the beginning of Jennifer's life inspired and powered her even more.

We spoke about the first job interview she had as Jennifer. She was afraid but excited. After living so many years in hiding from who she truly was, she knew she could never go back. She fully embraced herself and refused to pretend for anyone's comfort. Jennifer continues to experience discrimination and biases in both her personal and professional life. "To me, that's what it always comes down to, humanity and dignity. You don't have to agree or approve of the life decision I made, but I have a right to exist. It's not affecting your day-to-day life. If you gave it a few minutes, you would forget that I'm trans and we would be best friends," said Jennifer.

However, she has also experienced many people who have welcomed her with open arms, creating numerous fulfilling friendships and connections. To this day, she doesn't regret her decision, although it was a challenging process, both emotionally and socially. Jennifer is an excellent example of the power of living your authentic life.

Over 13 years in this newsletter, we have often spotlighted leaders and stalwarts who support our commitments to green and safe fleet vehicles. For all of us, including Jennifer, this sustainability work is a passion and focus of our careers. For Jennifer, it's just one aspect of an extraordinary life of service and courage. More on Jennifer's story can be found [here](#).

As Veteran's Day approaches, we thank all who have served our country with bravery and commitment. We're honored to celebrate Jennifer and all veterans who continue to make a difference in our community. Happy Veteran's Day!



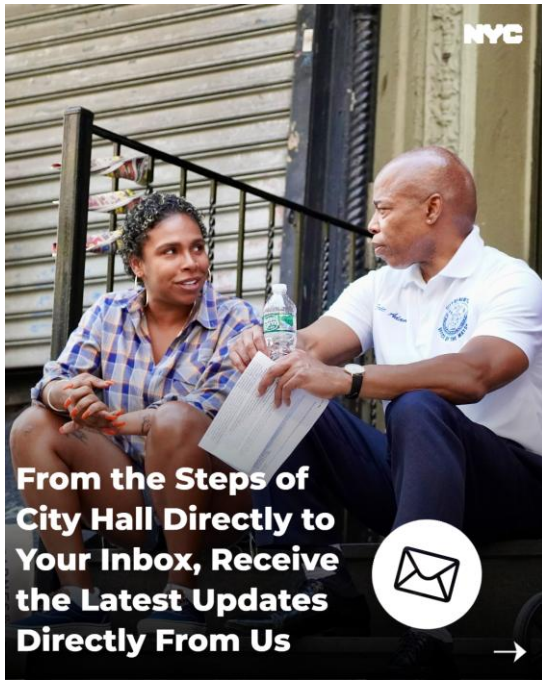
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Week in Review | October 25 - October 31



Whether you were running the marathon yesterday or racing around the neighborhood to trick-or-treat on Friday evening, it was an exciting weekend in New York City! I hope all your families had a great time. Last week was just as exciting for city government as we got even more amazing stuff done for our city's working-class families:

- The Office of Technology and Innovation and the NYPD started a pilot program to [integrate 911 response services directly with NYC Public](#)

[Schools](#), so our educators can initiate an instant police response in case of an active shooting or other incident.

- We announced new funding in the November Financial Plan to add 5,000 additional uniformed officers to the NYPD over the next three years. This addition will [bring our uniformed headcount up to 40,000 total police officers](#) — the highest number in 20 years.
- Our [Jamaica Neighborhood Plan](#) and our new vision for the [Kingsbridge Armory](#) both were approved by the City Council, and they approved our [OneLIC plan](#) for a full Council vote later this month. These projects will create 27,500 new homes and 24,600 jobs altogether.

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[NYC Fleet Newsletter 512, October 31, 2025](#): Dusk and Darkness Safety Campaign

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 511, October 24, 2025](#): NYPD Takes New Strides in Fleet Sustainability

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 510, October 17, 2025](#): NYC's Safest Drivers

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