



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**

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VET NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2004

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS RECIPIENTS

The United States Army Human Resources Command is searching for soldiers of Jewish American and Hispanic American descent who were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for actions from December 7, 1941 to December 12, 2001.



The Library of Congress Federal Research Division is conducting the research for review by the Military Awards Branch of the Army Human Resources Command to determine if the recipient should

have their award upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Further information is available at the VA Office or by visiting the Library of Congress website at www.loc.gov/r/r/frd/HRC/announcement.html or telephone at 1-866-730-8405.

TROOP RALLY

Plan to attend the Troop Rally/ 9-11 Remembrance to be held at Lexington District 1 Stadium on Sunday, September 12 at 3:00 p.m. Alternate site in case of inclement weather is White Knoll High School gymnasium.

Congressman Joe Wilson; BG Abraham Turner, Commander of Fort Jackson, and BG Buford Mabry will bring brief remarks. Members of Co. B, 122nd Engineer Battalion and the 132nd MP Company will also be honored. Several other units are also expected to participate.

Six ROTC units from local high schools will participate as well as several bands. Military equipment and memorabilia displays will be set up. Patriotic organizations and military service recruiting information will also be on hand.

Any group desiring to participate should notify the VA Office. Each group will be responsible for its own display table; no electrical service will be available.

Bring out your colors and show our troops, veterans, and the families of the 9/11 disaster that we still care, and we remember them and their sacrifices.

Collection boxes will be available at the site for collecting items for our deployed troops and for the children of Iraq and Afghanistan.

UPCOMING EVENTS September

- 6- **Labor Day
Labor Day Parade, Chapin- 9:30 a.m.**
- 7- **Outreach, Batesburg-Leesville- 8 a.m. -12**
- 10- **Patriots Day**
- 12- **Troop Rally, Lexington District 1
Stadium- 3 p.m.**
- 14- **Outreach, Chapin- 8 a.m. -12
POW/MIA Recognition Day**
- 21- **Outreach, Swansea- 8 a.m.-12**
- 26- **Gold Star Mother's Day**

DORN WORLD WAR II PROGRAM

Guy Wright, a resident of Summit, was the keynote speaker at the Dorn VA tribute to World War II veterans. Wright spoke to about 100 attendees about his experiences as a prisoner of war in the Philippines, Formosa, and Japan.



Each World War II veteran received a special medallion commemorating the dedication of the WWII Monument in Washington, DC.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MEDICAL CARE

Members of the National Guard and Reserve, collectively known as the Reserve Component, who are issued delayed-effective date active duty orders for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation may now submit claims for medical and dental care to TRICARE.

Under the Department of Defense 2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program (Section 703 of the National Defense Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2004), they will be reimbursed for TRICARE-covered medical and dental expenses incurred during the member's period of TRICARE eligibility.

Eligibility for the "early" TRICARE benefit (up to 60 days prior to reporting to active duty) is recorded in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System. Family members also are eligible for reimbursement for medical expenses for TRICARE-covered services incurred during this "early eligibility" period.

Family members also may choose to enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program. To obtain additional information on the TDP, family members may contact the program administrator, United Concordia Companies, Inc. at <http://www.ucci.com> or at (800) 866-8499.

TRICARE eligibility for RC members and their family members begins the later date of either the date their delayed-effective-date active duty orders were issued or 60 days before the member reported to active duty.

*Moncrief Army Community
Hospital Public Affairs Officer*



VOTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Military personnel on active duty have a resource for obtaining voting information, their unit Voting Assistance Officer. These VAOs are responsible for providing accurate, nonpartisan voting information and assistance to military personnel attempting to exercise their right to vote.

The VAOs are responsible to:

- Inform and educate citizens of their right to vote
- Foster voting participation
- Protect the integrity of and enhance the electoral process

TRICARE ONLINE

Retirees or others utilizing Tricare can make appointments by going online to www.tricareonline.com. The website allows appointments to be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For further information about Moncrief Army Community Hospital's program, go to their website at <http://moncrief.amedd.army.mil> or call at 751-0392.

LEXINGTON COUNTY KIA/MIA LIST

The VA Office is compiling a list of Lexington County veterans who were killed in action or are listed as missing in action in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

In our July 2004 newsletter, we published the name, rank, and service branch of those from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

If you have knowledge of any of these veterans, photos, memorabilia, etc., please bring them by the VA Office so we can copy for posterity. The VA Office staff will scan the photographs or memorabilia for presentation to the veteran and family as well as to the library.

FIRST UN COUNTEROFFENSIVE

Robert Weaver, a member of VFW Post 6740, has loaned the VA Office this framed print of the first UN counteroffensive during the Korean War. Titled "How It Ought to be Done," it depicts the Battle for Hill 256 on January 29-30, 1951.



"The Pledge of Allegiance" - Senator John McCain



As you may know, I spent five and one half years as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. In the early years of our imprisonment, the NVA kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell. In 1971 the NVA moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room.

This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change and was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans on behalf of a few hundred POWs 10,000 miles from home.

One of the men who moved into my room was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. At 17, he enlisted in the US Navy. He later earned a commission by going to Officer Training School. Then he became a Naval Flight Officer and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation of the opportunities this country and our military provide for people who want to work and want to succeed.

As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing.

Mike got himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he created an American flag from these handkerchiefs and scarves and sewed on the inside of his shirt.

Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

I know the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important part of our day now, but I can assure you that in that stark cell it was indeed the most important and meaningful event of our day.

One day the Vietnamese searched our cell, as they did periodically, and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it.

That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, and removed Mike and in our view, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours. Then, they opened the door of the cell and threw him back in. We cleaned him up as well as we could.

The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. A naked light bulb hung in each corner of the room.

As I said, we tried to clean up Mike as well as we could. After everything quieted down, I looked in the corner of the room, and sitting there beneath that dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. He was sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he had received, making another American flag. He was not making the flag because it made him feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was to us to be able to Pledge our Allegiance to our Flag and our Country.

So the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, you must never forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made to build our nation and promote freedom around the world.

You must remember our Duty, our Honor, and Our Country.

"I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, One Nation under God, Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

State of South Carolina

Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, throughout the history of our nation, many men and women have bravely served in our military, sacrificing much to preserve our country and protect the democratic ideals that make America a beacon of hope; and

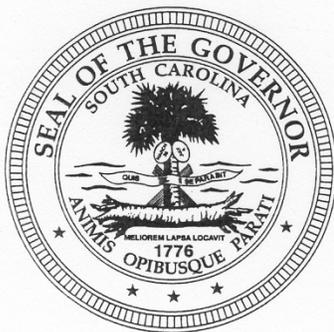
WHEREAS, some of those who have answered the call to service were captured in conflict and imprisoned by our enemies and tragically, many remain missing in action; and

WHEREAS, each year on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we honor those Americans who were prisoners of war, recognizing them for the valor and determination they showed in the face of unspeakable hardships, and those who remain unaccounted for, especially remembering the sacrifices of their families who must courageously face each day without knowing the fate of their loved ones.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Sanford, Governor of the Great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 14, 2004, as

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to remember in a special way those who have suffered the horrors of enemy captivity, those who have yet to return from battle, and the families who maintain their steadfast vigil in search of the peace that comes only with certainty.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA