

# Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County

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## VET NEWS

December 2007

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Dec. 7th Pearl Harbor  
Remembrance Day

Dec. 8th World War II  
began (1941)

Dec. 25th Christmas Day  
\* County Offices Closed on

Dec. 24th, 25th and 26th\*

**\*\*\*Note: THE DAV VAN  
WILL NOT RUN ON  
MON. (24th) or WEDS.  
(26th) \*\*\***



### CEMETERY NEWS

The National Cemetery in Anderson, S.C., officially named the **M.J. "Dolly" Cooper Veterans Cemetery**, is scheduled to open during the week of December 17th, 2007.



For more information regarding the cemetery please call **864-332-8022**.

### 'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone, in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney with presents to give and to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see, no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree. No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand. On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds, a sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and dreary. I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone, curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home. The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder, not how I pictured a United States soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I 'd just read? Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night, owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight. Soon round the world, the children would play, and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day. They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye, I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

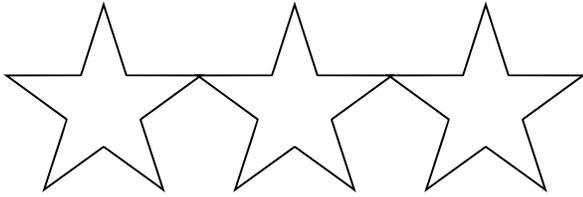
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice, "Santa don't cry, this life is my choice. I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, my life is my God, my Country, my Corps." The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep, I couldn't control it I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent and still and we both shivered from the cold night's chill. I didn't want to leave on that cold winter's night, this guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure, whispered "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all is secure." One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.

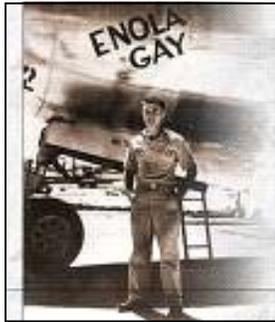
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."

-Anonymous



**GENERAL PAUL TIBBETS  
DIES AT AGE 92  
(PILOT of B-29 BOMBER THAT  
DROPPED BOMB ON HIROSHIMA)**

Paul Tibbets, pilot of the B-29 Bomber The Enola Gay, which dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August of 1945, died at his Columbus home on November 1, 2007.



Tibbets' historic mission in the plane that was named for his mother marked the beginning of the end of World War II. Dropping the bomb eliminated the need for what military strategists thought would have been an extraordinarily bloody invasion of Japan.

We were honored to have General Tibbets attend the dedication of the Lexington County Veterans Monument on November 11, 2002. During a banquet that followed the dedication, he spoke extensively about his wartime experiences.



**The Following is a Message from the Ad COUNCIL:**

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**You've Flown The Flag, Now What?**

Since September 11th, 2001, we have witnessed a powerful resurgence of the American spirit. But patriotism alone is not enough. We must protect ourselves and our families by learning how to be safe and calm in the event of a terrorist attack.

**First**, make an emergency supply kit. Set aside the supplies you'll need to survive three days at home. You'll need clothes, sleeping bags, nonperishable items and a gallon of water per person, per day. Other items will be helpful, too—a flashlight, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, a first aid kit and toiletries.

**Second**, make a family communications plan. Make sure family members know how to contact each other in an emergency. It may be smart to have everyone call an out-of-state friend or relative. Keep a list of emergency numbers near the phone. Plan how you will evacuate if you are asked to do so.

**Third**, be informed. In emergencies, planning pays off. If your family knows what to expect, all of you will be calmer in the aftermath of a terrorist event.

For details on emergency preparedness, visit the website [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). Or get a free brochure by calling **1-800-BE READY (1-800-237-3239)**

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**Quote of the month:** *“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”*



**Abraham Lincoln**

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD INFORMATION**

**The National Guard is looking for prior service veterans who are seeking to once again serve in the military.** If you are interested, you may contact a career counselor by calling **SFC Jimmy Foley** 803-667-2155. You may stop by **109T Old Chapin Road** (in the Shops of Flight Deck Restaurant) in **Lexington**.

**Veterans Share Service History on Registry Web Site**

*Army News Service*, Washington, D.C.--

Veterans have the opportunity to record details of their service for their descendants and future generations of the American public on the Registry of the American Soldier, managed by the Army Historical Foundation in Arlington, Virginia.

Every registry entry will include the Soldier's name, rank, hometown and service history. Registrants may also share their stories through anecdotes, memories and photographs. The registry will be an essential historical link between those who have served and the American public, according to a foundation official who encourages Army veterans to share their stories and memories. He believes their memories and personal experiences will bring Army history to life and make it memorable for future generations.

**Retired Col. Dave Fabian**, who serves as director of communications for the foundation, said the registry is something the organization wanted to make as a feature piece to the National Museum of the United States Army which will be constructed at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Plans call for registry kiosks to be built in the museum where visitors and Soldiers can sign up their relatives or themselves. Meanwhile, those eligible may enroll through the historical foundation's Web site. Spouses, parents, children and friends may also enroll Army veterans, including those who are deceased. Those who are unable to visit the future museum may still enroll online at [www.usarmyregistry.org](http://www.usarmyregistry.org).

"We have Army veterans signing up from 10 major wars and 178 campaigns throughout 232 years of the Army," Fabian said. "We have individuals represented by their relatives that go back to the colonial militias and to date, more than 52,358 currently serving Soldiers and veterans have enrolled to record their service histories in their own words."

Enrollees may also include a photo, though a \$10 processing fee is required. Fabian said the foundation will add audio and locator services to the registry in the future. Visitors will be able to plug in a Soldier's name, come up with his or her history and hear the voice of that Soldier, he said.

Of the 52,000-plus who have signed up since the registry began in 2005, 35 percent are World War II era vets, 20 percent fought in Korea, 25 percent represent Vietnam- service Soldiers, 15 percent are currently serving and the remaining 5 percent go back as far as 1775.





On the morning of June 3, 1969, 74 American sailors died when the destroyer **USS Frank E. Evans** was cut in two by an Australian aircraft carrier in the South China Sea.

The following is an article written by **Rolf A. Buchner**, one of the ship's survivors.

-Editor

Nestled into the side of a low hill, in our nation's capitol, is a wall. It is made of pieces of stone polished and shaped by the hand of man. And yet they come, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives and husbands, comrades in arms, ordinary citizens to gaze at the wall remembering and honoring 58195 lost lives.

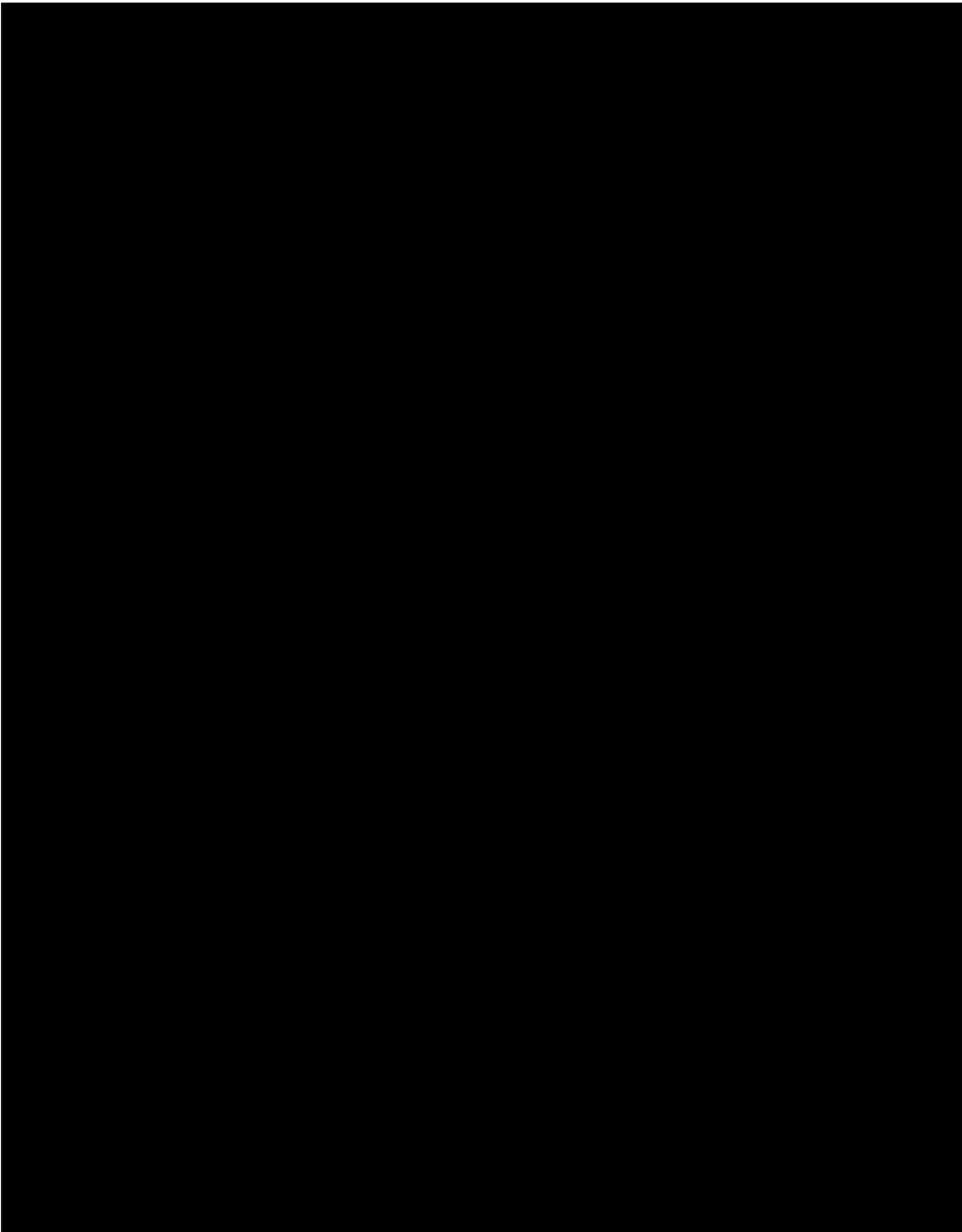
There are 74 other sailors who wonder why they are not honored and remembered by the masses but only by a few. It was early on the morning of June 3, 1969 in the South China Sea, when the 74 sailors gave their lives for their country. USS Frank E. Evans DD754 was one of several American ships participating in Operation Sea Spirit with ships from other SEATO countries. USS Frank E. Evans was providing ASW cover for HMAS Melbourne when Evans was ordered to change station. The new position for Evans would have her providing plane guard duty while HMAS Melbourne conducted air ops.

At 0315, due to human error, the bow of HMAS Melbourne slammed into Evans. Evans was split in two. In less than three minutes the bow section began its decent to the bottom of the South China Sea taking 74 sailors with it. These sailors who had recently been providing gun fire support for our troops in Viet Nam are not on that polished wall. The 74 sailors had unfortunately died on the other side of a line drawn in the ocean.

#### LEST WE FORGET

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

Rolf A. Buchner (Survivor)  
USS Frank E. Evans DD754



## VETERAN'S DAY 2007...REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

Excerpts taken from The Fort Jackson Leader newspaper, November 8, 2007 edition

Rodney Pimental enlisted in the Army in 1958. During his 30-year career, he saw a lot and accomplished much. He was a pilot and an Airborne Ranger. He was a soldier who did not complain about his missions, he just accomplished them.

"I'm just one of those guys who did two tours in Vietnam and didn't bellyache," he said. "Some of those who did didn't do much of the fighting."

After enlisting, Pimental tested well enough to be accepted to Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1959 and stationed at Fort Jackson. Originally an infantry officer. The Army was in need of helicopter pilots. "They tested me, and I tested high again, so they sent me to school to fly helicopters," he said. "I flew Hueys the first time in Vietnam, way out in the woods of Bam Me Thuot."

That first tour in Vietnam, Pimental said, was a challenging one. He and his troops had small generators that didn't produce much electricity, ate cornflakes, Spam and canned stew beef and slept in old GP medium tents. "GP" stands for "general purpose" or "great pain", depending on who you ask.

Flying anywhere from 10 to 12 hours a day, Pimental said his missions included everything from supplying isolated Army units with water, ammunition, food and mail to flying combat assaults. "It made for a pretty grueling day, but you didn't have time to feel sorry for yourself," he said. "Flying helicopters was enjoyable, but the combat assaults were pretty terrifying. In Vietnam, the jungle looks the same and it's tough to navigate."

Adding to this was the fact that helicopters do not perform as well there because of the heat, humidity and altitude. Failure to calculate this correctly when carrying supplies could-and often did-prove deadly. "A lot of helicopters were lost due to being overloaded," Pimental said.

About a year and a half after returning home, Pimental was sent to Vietnam for a second tour, this time as the commander of a Chinook helicopter company. With 16 Chinooks and about 250 men under his command, Pimental said living conditions in Chu Lai were much better. They lived in hooches, had electricity and mess halls. He didn't fly combat assaults anymore, but one enemy was ever-present: boredom.

"There was just really nothing to do and nowhere to go," he said. "We read books, played cards and most of it was work all the time."

Pimental came home in May of 1969 and has not been back since. He said he saw a lot of things "you don't like to see" and has no fond memories of the place. "There were a lot of bad experiences, but time heals it and thank God your mind tends to remember the good things, not bad things," he said.

About 12 years into his military service, Pimental earned his bachelor's degree in Business Management by going to night school while on active duty, married and with three children.

Pimental retired in 1988 as a lieutenant colonel. He currently works for Lexington County.

**Rod Pimental** standing in front of **Huey** helicopter; photo taken in **December 1965**



## UNDERSTANDING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

**PART I in series of 3 articles addressing this issue...PARTS II and III will follow in subsequent newsletters.—Editor**

### PART ONE: WHAT IS PTSD?

According to the book “*What Every Veteran Should Know*”, published in 2006, Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder resulting from a psychologically stressful event beyond the scope of “normal” human experience. The trauma may be experienced alone (rape or assault) or in the company of groups of people (military combat). **Stressors** producing PTSD include natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, etc..) accidental man-made disasters (car accidents, airplane crashes, large fires) or deliberate man-made disasters (bombing, torture, death camps). **Symptoms** include: **recurrent thoughts of a traumatic event, reduced involvement in work or outside interests, hyper alertness, anxiety and irritability.**

Another source, “*Veterans and Families’ Guide to Recovering from PTSD*”, outlines the diagnostic criteria in the following way:

**A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both the following were present:**

- 1) The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
- 2) The person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

**B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one or more of the following ways:**

Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections or dreams of the event; reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, flashbacks; intense distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble event; physiological reactivity to those cues that symbolize or resemble aspect of actual event.

**C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma) as indicated by three or more of the following:**

- 1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
- 2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
- 3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
- 4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
- 5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
- 6) restricted range of affect (inability to have loving feelings)
- 7) sense of foreshortened future (doesn’t expect to have career, marriage, children, normal life span)

**D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two or more of the following:**

- 1) Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- 2) Irritability or outbursts of anger
- 3) Difficulty concentrating
- 4) Hypervigilance
- 5) Exaggerated startle response

**E. Duration of the disturbance (as outlined in B,C, and D) is more than one month.**

**F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.**

**PTSD is a normal reaction to an abnormal event. PTSD can be debilitating. However, no one has to live without hope. Stay tuned for more information on this condition and on where you or a loved one can go for help in recovering from this.**



***A FEW IMAGES FROM THE LEXINGTON COUNTY  
VETERANS DAY PARADE 2007***

## **WIVES OF VIETNAM VETS**

The next meeting of the support group for wives (or significant others) of veterans who served in the Vietnam War will be December 17th at noon. The meetings are held in room 110 of the building at 605 West Main Street in Lexington.

David Cox of the Columbia Vet Center is the host of this group. He may be reached by calling 803-765-9944 or 803-785-8400.

Join us for this time of support, encouragement and fun.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY  
605 West Main Street, Suite 101  
Lexington, SC 29072  
(803) 785-8400**

### **DECEMBER OUTREACH PROGRAM**

Dec. 4th	9-12	Batesburg/Leesville
Dec. 11th	9-12	Chapin
Dec. 18th	9-12	Swansea
Dec. 25th	9-12	<b>*NO OUTREACH</b>
		West Columbia—
		<b>*Christmas Holiday*</b>

### **TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Lexington Main Office:	785-8400
From Batesburg/Leesville:	332-8400
From Chapin:	941-0231