

# Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County



TELEPHONE: (803) 785-8400

FAX: (803) 785-0115

EDITOR: *Debbie Myers*

## VET NEWS

January 2009

**GARY R. BAKER**  
DIRECTOR

**BARBARA O'CONNOR**  
ASST. CSO

**JENNIFER HENDRIX**  
VETERANS SPECIALIST

605 WEST MAIN STREET  
SUITE 101  
LEXINGTON, S.C. 29072

### JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

- Jan. 1st— New Year's Day**  
All County Offices Closed
- Jan. 12th—Veterans Advisory Committee Meeting**  
7PM
- Jan. 19th—Martin Luther King Day**  
All County Offices Closed
- Jan. 20th—Presidential Inaugural**  
Swearing-In Ceremony



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Government is not reason; it is not eloquent; it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

**-President George Washington**

### INAUGURAL SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

Experience history in the making as the president-elect is sworn in and gives the Presidential Inaugural Address which will take place at noon on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, DC on January 20, 2009.

## The First Inauguration Of George Washington



We all have heard details, read stories, or seen illustrations about George Washington, some clearly mythic and hard to believe. For instance, the incredible popularity enjoyed by Washington throughout his life. These days, when a 60% public approval rating is seldom within the grasp of any public figure, Washington was revered by nearly 100% of all Americans. His reputation had spread worldwide, and he was widely admired as a paragon of noble character and civic service. Nowhere was this more evident than at his inauguration as our nation's first President.

Imagine the situation, on April 30, 1789, when Washington was sworn in as Chief Executive and Commander in Chief of the United States, our country had just emerged from the trauma and upheaval of the American Revolution. The Electoral College, despite heated disputes on nearly every subject, still elected Washington as America's first President without a single dissenting vote. Many books written at the time lavish praise on Washington for the qualities he incorporated in his family, religious, military and civic life.

Washington's first inaugural speech was only six minutes long, the shortest in history, yet it exemplifies his humble reluctance to accept so high an office. At the same time, it shows his determination to serve the new country to the best of his ability. It is appropriate that we remember his legacy to our nation by celebrating the moment in history when he assumed for the first time the most important office the American people can offer.

Source: <http://www.srmason-sj.org/council/journal/sep99/melius.html>.

The First Inauguration of George Washington, by John D. Melius

# Van Drivers Appreciation Luncheon 2008



Pictured above are: (seated) Gary R. Baker, Director, Lexington County Veterans Affairs, Jim Bokanovich, Tommy Goins, Transportation Coordinator for Dorn VA Medical Center, (standing) Ted Powell, Craig Brandt, Bill Arndt, Stan Thornburgh, Ed Gavin, Charlie Davis, and Roger Rucker.

The office staff held a van drivers appreciation luncheon on Friday, December 5th, to honor the drivers for all of their hard work. Drivers and their spouses were treated to a homemade meal of lasagna, tossed salad, garlic bread and cheesecake. The drivers each received certificates of appreciation for their total number of miles driven as well as goodie bags. The items in the bags were donated by the Blue Star Mothers, Flight Deck, Morningside Assisted Living, Walter P. Rawl Farms, Lexington County Employee Committee, Lexington Women's Club and various Armed Forces Recruiting Offices.

We want to thank our drivers (and their spouses) for all their time and hard work. This is a special group of guys.

**THANKS  
FOR ALL YOU DO**

# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS

PART SEVEN IN THIS SERIES OF INTERVIEWS

## JIM BOKANOVICH

**Q: Where are you from originally?**

**A: Moundsville, WV**

**Q: If not a native, what brought you to Lexington County and how long have you lived here?**

**A: Retired at Shaw AFB in April 1978 and then worked for the State of SC for 16 years. I drove back and forth for 1 year and then purchased our current home in Cayce in May of 1979. Been here for 29 years.**

**Q: Tell us about your family.**

**A: Wife's name is Dottie. Daughter, Loretta Anne, and hubby, plus 4 grandkids live in PA. Step-daughter, Becki, lives in CO. Step-son, Rick, lives in VT. Step-son, David, lives in FL.**

**Q: Are you a Veteran?**

**A: Yes, U.S. Air Force (1952-1978). Served in Korea (9/52—9/53) and Vietnam (9/67 -9/68)**

**Q: What is your current or former occupation, if retired?**

**A: Purchasing (contract administrator) 17 years in the Air Force and 16 years with the State.**

**Q: What are your hobbies and interests?**

**A: Volunteering at the VA hospital and driving the DAV van for Lexington County; attending American Legion, DAV, and Masonic Meetings. Also, play a little golf now and then.**



**Q: Please share something our readers might be surprised to know about you:**

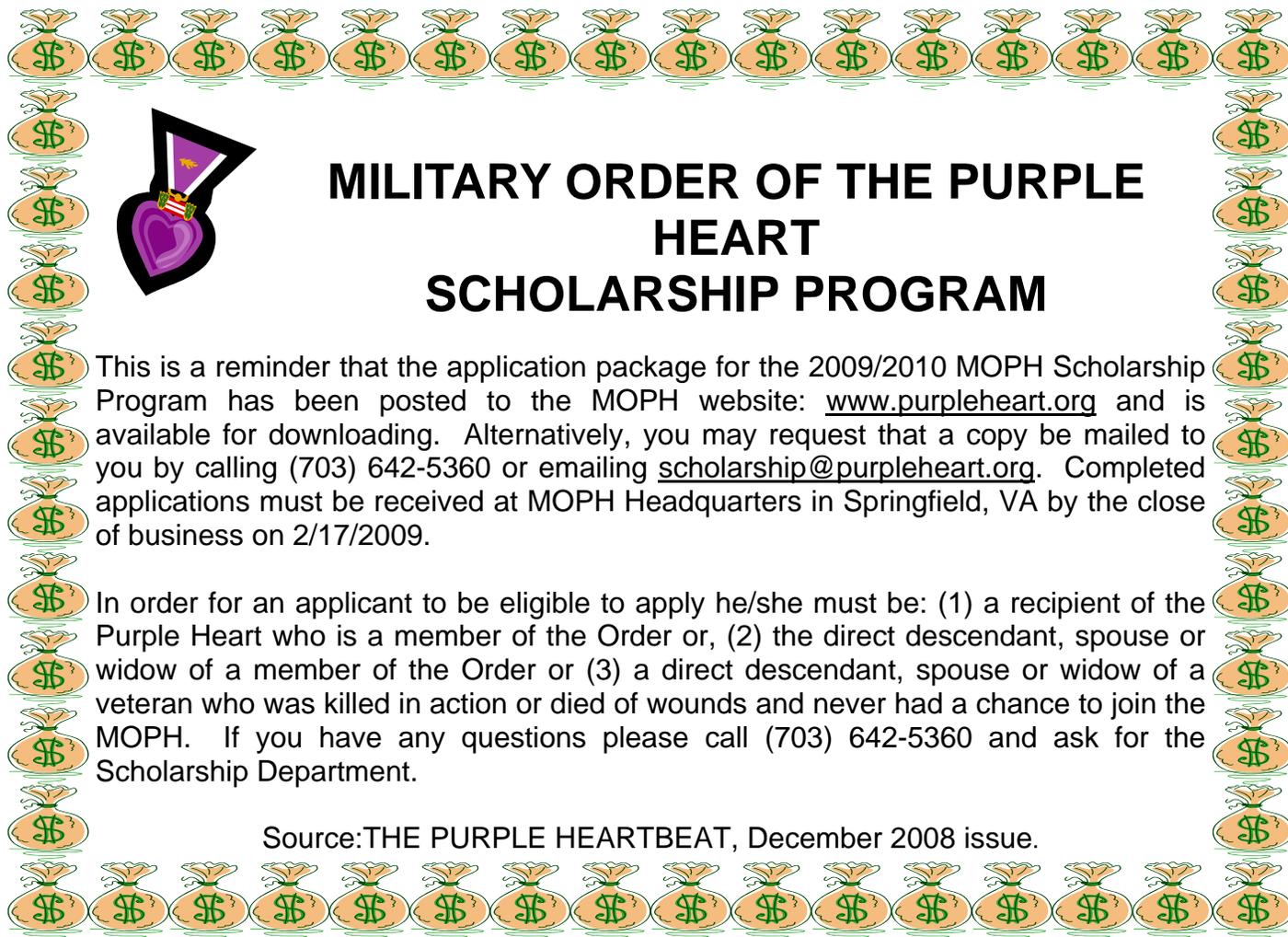
**A: In our younger days, we did a lot of dancing (Big Band and Polkas). We still like the music, but the legs don't move as fast as they used to.**

**Favorite Historical Quote? "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." - (John F. Kennedy)**

**Favorite Military Quote? "I shall return" (General Douglas Mac Arthur)**



Mr. Bokanovich's birthday is January 24th. Please join us in wishing him a very Happy Birthday!



## MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This is a reminder that the application package for the 2009/2010 MOPH Scholarship Program has been posted to the MOPH website: [www.purpleheart.org](http://www.purpleheart.org) and is available for downloading. Alternatively, you may request that a copy be mailed to you by calling (703) 642-5360 or emailing [scholarship@purpleheart.org](mailto:scholarship@purpleheart.org). Completed applications must be received at MOPH Headquarters in Springfield, VA by the close of business on 2/17/2009.

In order for an applicant to be eligible to apply he/she must be: (1) a recipient of the Purple Heart who is a member of the Order or, (2) the direct descendant, spouse or widow of a member of the Order or (3) a direct descendant, spouse or widow of a veteran who was killed in action or died of wounds and never had a chance to join the MOPH. If you have any questions please call (703) 642-5360 and ask for the Scholarship Department.

Source: THE PURPLE HEARTBEAT, December 2008 issue.

## Enhanced VA Mortgage Options Now Available for Veterans

### *Of Potential Benefit to Those in Financial Distress*

Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. These new options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008 (PL 110-389), which the President signed into law on October 10, 2008. Veterans in financial distress due to high rate subprime mortgages are potentially the greatest beneficiaries.

For more information, or to obtain help from a VA Loan Specialist, veterans may call the VA at 1-877-827-3702 or visit [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov).

Source: The American Legion Bulletin, 33-08, dated October 24, 2008.

# ARBOR DAY TREE PLANTING HONORS VETERANS



**On December 5th** a ceremony and tree planting were held in celebration of ARBOR DAY. The tree that was planted in front of the Lexington County courthouse was dedicated to the men and women of the Armed Forces. Local dignitaries were on hand to participate in the planting.



## POEM HONORING OUR FLAG AND THOSE WHO SERVE

Poem written by Terry Odessa Paris

\*\*\*\*\*

I remember each day at school before class was to start  
We would stand beside our desk and place our hand over our heart.  
We would "PLEDGE" to this material of RED, WHITE and BLUE...  
Then we would sing "AMERICA" and be seated when we were through.  
I was very young then and didn't quite understand...  
That this material I "PLEDGED" to was the symbol of this land  
(Well) as I grew older and became somewhat wise...  
I learned what it stood for and the reasons that it flies  
It represents our "FREEDOM" for which many others have sought...  
It "SALUTES" those who have given themselves in the battles that were fought...  
Each day I proudly display my flag for all others to see...  
That this is my way to "SALUTE" those who have maintained these rights for me!!!

*Terry dedicated this poem to her father Johnny C. Hill, Retired 1st Sgt., and to all the men and women who have served and those who continue to serve this great country.*

# VA COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS QUICK REFERENCE SHEET 2009

## Compensation:

### Monthly Rate: Statutory Award:

|      |        |    |        |
|------|--------|----|--------|
| 10%  | \$123  | K  | \$96   |
| 20%  | \$243  | L  | \$3327 |
| 30%  | \$376  | M  | \$3671 |
| 40%  | \$541  | N  | \$4176 |
| 50%  | \$770  | O  | \$4667 |
| 60%  | \$974  | P  | \$4667 |
| 70%  | \$1228 | R1 | \$6669 |
| 80%  | \$1427 | R2 | \$7650 |
| 90%  | \$1604 | S  | \$2993 |
| 100% | \$2673 | Q  | \$67   |

### \*\*\*Dependent Allowance: (Monthly)

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Spouse:           | \$45-\$150 |
| Spouse & Child:   | \$77-\$259 |
| Child Only:       | \$30-\$101 |
| Each Dependent:   | \$22-\$75  |
| Dependent Parent: | \$36-\$120 |

\*\*Depending on the current percentage\*\*

### Unusual Medical Expenses: (Monthly)

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Veteran:               | \$592 |
| Veteran w/1 Dependent: | \$775 |
| Spouse:                | \$397 |

## Children of Women

### Vietnam Veterans: (Monthly)

|            |        |
|------------|--------|
| Level I:   | \$131  |
| Level II:  | \$286  |
| Level III: | \$984  |
| Level IV:  | \$1678 |

### Spinal Bifida Benefits: (Monthly)

|          |        |
|----------|--------|
| Level 1: | \$286  |
| Level 2: | \$984  |
| Level 3: | \$1678 |

Clothing Allowance (Annual) \$716

Automobile Allowance (Once) \$11,000

### DIC Benefits: (Monthly)

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Regular DIC:                 | \$1154 |
| Housebound add:              | \$135  |
| A&A add:                     | \$286  |
| P&T for 8 years or more add: | \$246  |
| Each child add:              | \$286  |

## Pension:

### Category: Monthly/Annual

|                  |        |         |
|------------------|--------|---------|
| Veteran:         | \$985  | \$11830 |
| Veteran w/1 Dep: | \$1291 | \$15493 |
| Each Add Dep:    | \$168  | \$2020  |

### Aid & Attendance:

|                  |        |         |
|------------------|--------|---------|
| Veteran:         | \$1644 | \$19736 |
| Veteran w/1 Dep: | \$1949 | \$23396 |
| Each Add Dep     | \$168  | \$2020  |

### Housebound:

|                  |        |         |
|------------------|--------|---------|
| Veteran:         | \$1204 | \$14457 |
| Veteran w/1 Dep: | \$1510 | \$18120 |
| Each Add Dep     | \$168  | \$2020  |

### Two Married Veterans Monthly/Annual

Veteran: \$1291 \$15493

### Survivors: Monthly/Annual

|                       |        |         |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| Spouse:               | \$661  | \$7933  |
| Spouse w/1 Child:     | \$865  | \$10385 |
| Spouse w/A&A:         | \$1065 | \$12681 |
| Spouse w/1 Dep, A&A   | \$1099 | \$13195 |
| Spouse Housebound:    | \$808  | \$9696  |
| Spouse w/1 Dep, HB:   | \$1012 | \$12144 |
| Each Dependent Child: | \$168  | \$2020  |

### Income Limitations: (Section 306) (Annual)

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Veteran:               | \$13456 |
| Widow:                 | \$13456 |
| Veteran w/1 Dep:       | \$18087 |
| Veteran w/ 1 Dep, A&A: | \$18587 |
| Widow w/ 1 Dep:        | \$18087 |
| Child Alone:           | \$11001 |

Spouse's Income Exclusion: (Annual) \$4295

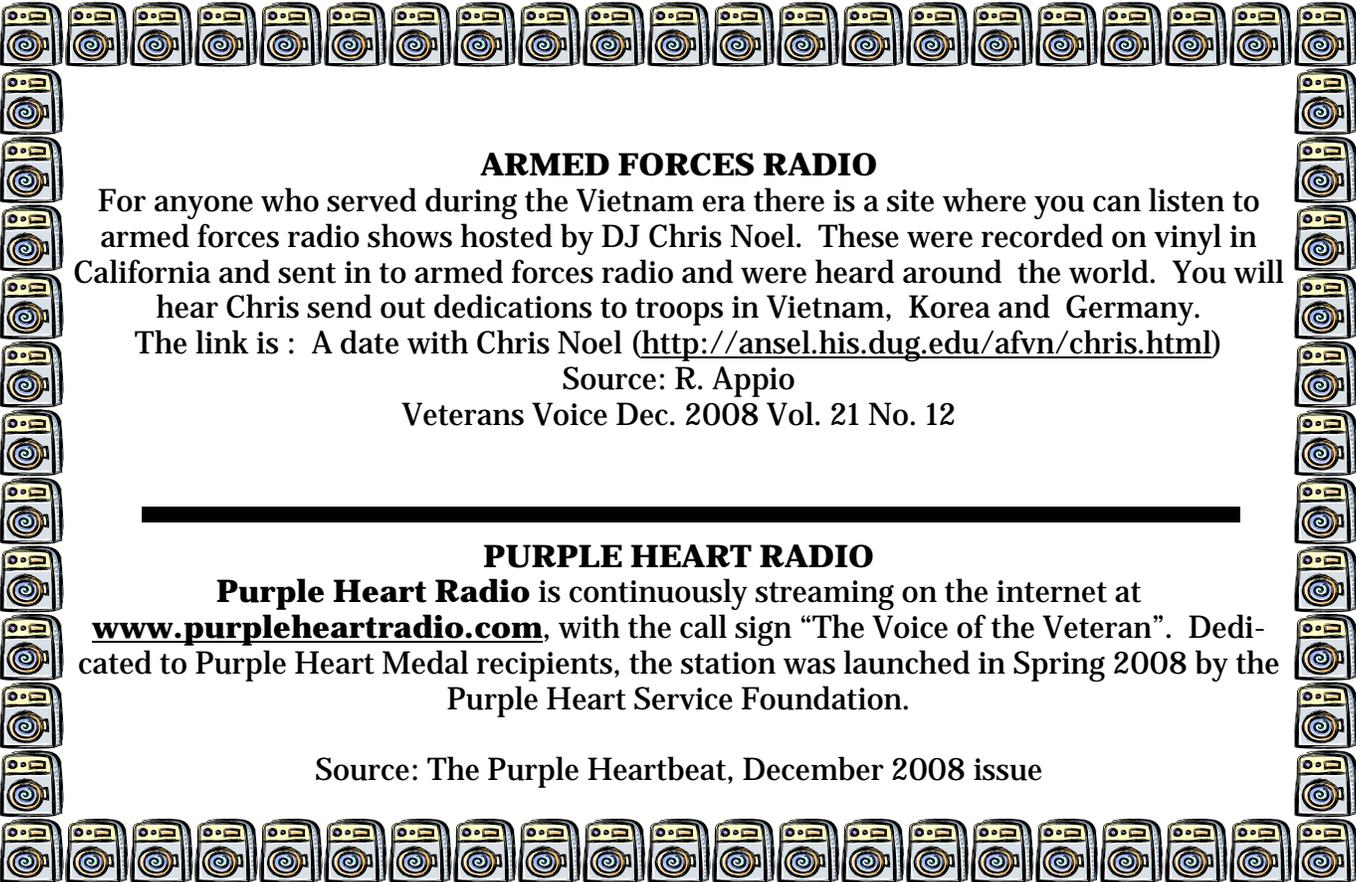
Child Income Exclusion: (Annual) \$9350

### Burial, Headstone, & Plot Rate Table:

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Headstones:                    | \$136  |
| Service-Connected Burials:     | \$2000 |
| Non Service-Connected Burials: | \$300  |
| Plot Allowance:                | \$300  |
| State Cemetery Plot Allowance: | \$300  |

Medal of Honor Allowance (Annual) \$1194

Medicare Rates (Monthly) \$96.40



### ARMED FORCES RADIO

For anyone who served during the Vietnam era there is a site where you can listen to armed forces radio shows hosted by DJ Chris Noel. These were recorded on vinyl in California and sent in to armed forces radio and were heard around the world. You will hear Chris send out dedications to troops in Vietnam, Korea and Germany. The link is : A date with Chris Noel (<http://ansel.his.dug.edu/afvn/chris.html>)

Source: R. Appio  
Veterans Voice Dec. 2008 Vol. 21 No. 12

---

### PURPLE HEART RADIO

**Purple Heart Radio** is continuously streaming on the internet at [www.purpleheartradio.com](http://www.purpleheartradio.com), with the call sign "The Voice of the Veteran". Dedicated to Purple Heart Medal recipients, the station was launched in Spring 2008 by the Purple Heart Service Foundation.

Source: The Purple Heartbeat, December 2008 issue

## Remains of Korean War MIA Found



The Army says it has identified the remains of a Central Texas soldier who's been missing in action since a 1950 Korean War battle. The Army says Corporal Librado Luna of Taylor was returned to his family for burial with full military honors in his hometown on November 25, 2008, the 58th anniversary of the battle in which he went missing.

Luna was a part of a troop formation arrayed along the leading edge on the U.N. front near the Chinese border on November 25, 1950, when the Chinese Army attacked in force. Of the 91 men in the two companies involved in the battle of Ch'ongch'on River, 22 escaped safely. Luna and nine other men were among those reported missing.

Source: ARMYTIMES.com Associated Press Posted: Tuesday, Nov 18, 2008 taken from the "Veterans Voice" Volume 21 Number 12, December issue.

# You Are Not Forgotten

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

PRSR STD  
U S POSTAGE PAID  
LEXINGTON, SC  
PERMIT NO. 90

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**JANUARY OUTREACH  
PROGRAM DATES**

**Jan. 6th: 9-12 Batesburg-Leesville**  
**Jan. 13th: 9-12 Chapin**

---

**TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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

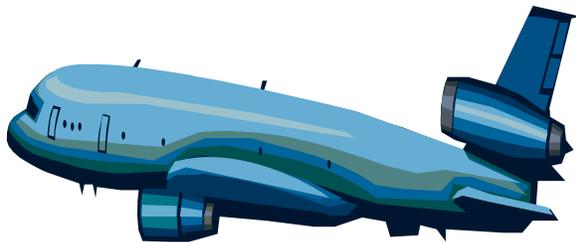
**Just a Reminder:**

**NEXT HONOR FLIGHTS  
SCHEDULED FOR**

**April 15th, 2009**

**May 2nd, 2009**

[www.honorflightsc.com](http://www.honorflightsc.com)



**We Honor Those Who Serve**

**Meeting Reminder:**  
**Wives/Significant Others of Com-**  
**bat Veterans**

PLEASE NOTE\*\*\* The first two scheduled meetings of the wives/significant others of combat veterans in 2009 are as follows:

- ⇒ Monday, Jan. 12th
- ⇒ Monday, Feb. 9th

These meetings begin at **noon** and are conducted in the auditorium of our office building at **605 West Main Street** in Lexington. David Cox of the Columbia Vet Center is the group facilitator, who would like to extend an opportunity for others to join. No appointment is necessary.

For more information, please call our office at **785-8400** or call **765-9944**.