



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

July 2012

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From the Director...

July is always hot and sultry in South Carolina but does feature one of the greatest festivals in the state. The 54th annual Peach Festival in Gilbert has always been a favorite of mine and that of my family. Last year was the first time I rode in the parade as your County Veterans' Affairs Officer and I was in a 1929 Model A Ford driven by Korean War and Vietnam War Veteran, Leo Craps. This year, I will be riding in the parade in the same car driven by Mr. Craps who has become a dear friend to me.

We celebrate Independence Day this month and commemorate the freedom of this country that we call home. Most people do not equate this holiday with blood, sweat and tears but rather barbecues, the beach and fireworks. All of these events are great but what made Independence Day possible, are those Revolutionary War heroes that forced the British to release control of this country. Many of them are our ancestors and I salute their service and sacrifice to make this the greatest country on earth.

On a sad note, our office learned late last month of the death of Judy Baker, wife of former County Veterans' Affairs Officer Gary Baker. We closed the office to attend her funeral because she was an integral part of the office during Gary's tenure and a member of the family. We pray for Gary and his family during this difficult time. Additionally, news from the War on Terror in Afghanistan hit home the same week of Judy's passing. South Carolina lost three brave Soldiers on June 20, 2012 and two of those were from Lexington County. It hit my office especially hard because two members of the staff knew one of the Soldiers. It reminds all of us that we are still a nation at war and the price of war sometimes, unfortunately, is the death of a beloved son, daughter, father, mother, husband, wife or friend. Let us pray vigilantly for these families who are suffering the loss of a beloved family member and may God strengthen and comfort them in the long days ahead.

This month marks my first anniversary in this office and I am honored and humbled to serve the best people on earth, our Veteran's. There are approximately 24,000 Veterans in Lexington County and I want to meet all of them, so I have a lot of work to do and I relish that work. I have met many of them and their survivors during this first year in office and I am blessed to be able to serve them.

Happy Independence Day!



*County Offices will be closed
on Wednesday, July 4th for
Independence Day.*

AT-A-GLANCE
July

Saturday, July 2nd	US Army Air Corps Established in 1926
Wednesday, July 4th	Independence Day (1776) County Offices Closed No Van Scheduled Lexington County Peach Festival in Gilbert
Thursday, July 5th	Gaston/Swansea Outreach
Friday, July 6th	Chapin Outreach
Thursday, July 12th	Cayce/West Columbia Outreach
Friday, July 13th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Monday, July 16th	VA presentation— Lexington Sertoma Club @ Flight Deck Restaurant 6:30pm—8:30pm
Friday, July 27th	VA Presentation—Heritage at Lowman Home 3:00pm—4:00pm
Saturday, July 28th	World War I began (1914)

- Purple—Holidays/Special Days
- Blue—Outreach dates
- Red—County Offices Closed/No van scheduled
- Black—Director’s appearances in the County
- Pink—Special Events throughout the County
- Orange—Special event—Director Out of Office
- Dark Green—Special Notices



Lexington, SC.

YOUR VA OFFICE STAFF

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**JUNE DATES FOR
OUTREACH PROGRAM**

July 5th - Gaston/Swansea Outreach
July 6th - Chapin Outreach
July 12th - Cayce/West Columbia Outreach
July 13th - Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

**TOLL-FREE
TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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

*We are now emailing copies of the newsletter.
Please contact the office to be added to the
newsletter email list.*

New Office Policy

You must call the office to schedule an appointment for outreach in all four areas. Walk-ins will be seen after appointments if time permits.

Vocational Rehabilitation

What is the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment VetSuccess Program?

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess Program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The VetSuccess program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VetSuccess offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

Services that may be provided by the VR&E VetSuccess Program include:

- Comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment
- Vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment services
- Employment services such as job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance
- Assistance finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations
- On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences
- Post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school
- Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals
Independent living services for Veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities

Who is Eligible for VR&E VetSuccess Services?

Active Duty Service Members are eligible if they:

- * Expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty
- * Obtain a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the VA
- * Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess services

Veterans are eligible if they:

- * Have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- * Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- * Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess services

Basic period of Eligibility

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E VetSuccess services may be used is 12 years from the latter of the following:

- * Date of separation from active military service, or
- * Date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating.

The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) determines that a Veteran has a Serious Employment Handicap

What Happens after Eligibility is Established?

The Veteran is scheduled to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) for a comprehensive evaluation to determine if he / she is entitled for services. A comprehensive evaluation includes:

- An assessment of the Veteran's interests, aptitudes, and abilities
- An assessment of whether service connected disabilities impair the Veteran's ability to find and / or hold a job using the occupational skills he or she has already developed
- Vocational exploration and goal development leading to employment and / or maximum independence at home and in the Veteran's community

What is an Entitlement Determination?

A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) works with the Veteran to complete a determination if an employment handicap exists. An employment handicap exists if the Veteran's service connected disability impairs his/her ability to obtain and maintain a job. Entitlement to services is established if the veteran has an employment handicap and is within his or her 12-year basic period of eligibility and has a 20 % or greater service-connected disability rating.

If the service connected disability rating is less than 20%, or if the Veteran is beyond the 12-year basic period of eligibility, then a serious employment handicap must be found to establish entitlement to VR&E VetSuccess services. A serious employment handicap is based on the extent of services required to help a Veteran to overcome his or her service and non-service connected disabilities permitting the return to suitable employment.

What Happens after the Entitlement Determination is Made?

The Veteran and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) work together to:

- Identify viable employment and / or independent living services options
- Determine transferable skills, aptitudes, and interests
- Explore labor market and wage information
- Identify physical demands and other job characteristics
- Narrow vocational options to identify a suitable employment goal
- Select a VR&E VetSuccess program track leading to an employment or independent living goal
- Investigate training requirements
- Identify resources needed to achieve rehabilitation
- Develop an individualized rehabilitation plan to achieve the identified employment and/or independent living goals

What is a Rehabilitation Plan?

A rehabilitation plan is an individualized, written outline of the services, resources and criteria that will be used to achieve employment and / or independent living goals. The plan is an agreement that is signed by the Veteran and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and is updated as needed to assist the Veteran to achieve his/her goals. Depending on their circumstances, veterans will work with their VRC to select one of the following five tracks of services:

- Reemployment (with a former employer)
- Direct job placement services for new employment
- Self-employment
- Employment through long term services including OJT, college, and other training
- Independent living services

What Happens after the Rehabilitation Plan is Developed?

After a plan is developed and signed, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or case manager will continue to work with the Veteran to implement the plan to achieve suitable employment and/or independent living. The VRC or case manager will provide ongoing counseling, assistance, and coordinate services such as tutorial assistance, training in job-seeking skills, medical and dental referrals, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, if applicable, and other services as required to help the Veteran achieve rehabilitation.

Summary of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment VetSuccess Program (Chapter 31) Process

A VA Veteran who is eligible for an evaluation under Chapter 31 must first apply for services and receive an appointment with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). The VRC will work with the Veteran to determine if an employment handicap exists as a result of his or her service connected disability. If an employment handicap is established and the Veteran is found entitled to services, the VRC and the Veteran will continue counseling to select a track of services and jointly develop a plan to address the Veteran's rehabilitation and employment needs.

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Changes in the Outreach Programs

These changes will take place starting July 1st.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach – 1st Thursday of the month at the Gaston Library from 10am to 1pm.

Chapin Outreach – 1st Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 9am to 11am.



Cayce/West Columbia Outreach – 2nd Thursday of the month at the Cayce/West Columbia Library from 9am to 12noon.

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach – 2nd Friday of the month at the Batesburg/Leesville Library from 9am to 12 noon.



Appointments for outreach dates are greatly appreciated.
Please call the office to schedule.



Veteran's Monument across from the Administration Building

Prints for Sale

\$10.00 each



Gibson's Pond in Lexington

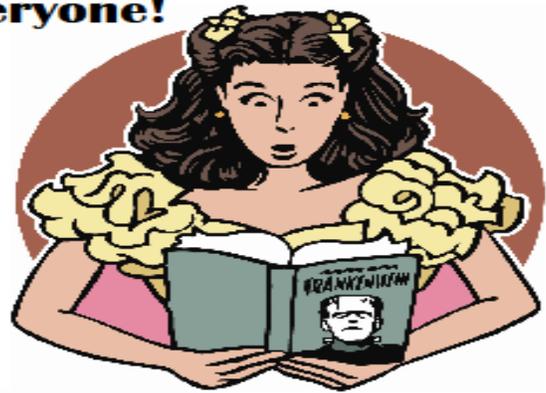
We have several copies of both of these prints for sale in our office. The cost is \$10.00 each. The proceeds will be placed in our Veteran's Fund and/or Van Fund. Your donation is tax-deductible and a receipt can be provided if you wish. To have a closer look at the prints, we have framed copies in our lobby. Please stop by our office M-F from 8 to 5 to purchase one or more of these beautiful prints!

Summer Reading is fun for everyone!



It's as easy as:

- Register at your branch
- Read whatever you like
- Fill in your summer bookmark
- Return your bookmark to enter the prize drawing



Adult Summer Reading Program 2012 May 29 - August 11



Adult Summer Reading Guidelines:

- Age 18 and older
- One prize entry per person, per day
- Read 3 books to enter
- 3 magazines = 1 book
- Register and enter prize drawings at the same branch



County Council Needs You!

Veterans are needed to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at County Council meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. County Council meetings start at 4:30pm, so you would need to be present around 4 to 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400 if you are interested.



Remember to look for Ed at the Lexington County Peach Festival on July 4th.



VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN LEXINGTON COUNTY

AMERICAN LEGION

Post #7-Lexington: Meets the first Saturday of the month (except before a holiday) at 1900.

Address is: American Legion Road, Lexington.

Post #61-Batesburg Leesville: Meets the third Tuesday of the month at 2000.

Address is: South Hendrix Street, Leesville.

Post #79-West Columbia: Meets the first Monday of the month at 1930.

Address is: 700 B Avenue, West Columbia

Post #90-South Congaree: Meets the first Thursday of the month at 1900.

Address is: Hwy. 302 near South Congaree.

Post #130-Cayce: Meets the third Thursday of the month at 1830.

Address is: Naples Avenue, Cayce.

Post #142-Gilbert: Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 4200 Veterans Road, Gilbert

Post #156-Sandy Run: Meets the fourth Monday of the month.

Address is: Pine Plain Road outside of Gaston, just off Old Sandy Run Road.

Post #174-Irmo: Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 801 Piney Woods Road, Columbia

Post #193-Chapin: Meets the second Thursday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 102 Lexington Ave., Chapin.

Post #217-Lexington: Meets the second Thursday of the month at 1930.

Address is:

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Chapter #4-West Columbia: Meets the second Monday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 511 Violet Street, West Columbia.

Chapter #13-West Columbia: Meets the second Saturday of the month at 1300.

Address is: 511 Violet Street, West Columbia.

Chapter #20-West Columbia: Meets the third Saturday of the month at 1100.

Address is: 511 Violet Street, West Columbia.

Chapter #28-West Columbia: Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1800.

Address is: 511 Violet Street, West Columbia.

Chapter #51-Leesville: Meets the third Thursday of the month at 1900.

Address is: South Hendrix Street, Leesville.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post #6740-Lake Murray: Meets the of the month at

Address is: 950 Rock N Creek Road, Leesville.

Post #8738-Lexington: Meets the first Tuesday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 424 Cedarcrest Drive, Lexington.

Post #9037-Pelion: Meets the third Monday of the month at 1930.

Address is: 505 Canal Drive, Pelion.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Detachment #1141-West Columbia: Meets the second Thursday of the month at 1900 .

Address is: 511 Violet Street, West Columbia.

BLUE STAR MOTHERS

Midlands Chapter-Lexington: Meets the third Thursday of the month at 1800.

Address is: 424 Cedarcrest Drive, Lexington.

AMVETS

Post #2-West Columbia: Meets the of the month at

Address is: 1778 D Avenue, West Columbia.

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

Chapter #402-Columbia: Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 200 Pickens Street, Columbia.

NAVY SEABEES

SCX #2-West Columbia: Meets the second Monday of the month at 1900.

Address is: 179 Lynn Street, West Columbia.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Chapter #303, Sandlappers-Columbia: Meets the third Tuesday of the month at 1900

Address is: 200 Pickens Street, Columbia

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

VA Regional Office-Columbia is the nearest chapter.

Address is: 6439 Garner's Ferry Road, Columbia



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Featured Medal:

Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal

The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (GWOTEM) is a United States armed forces military award created by George W. Bush on March 12, 2003 by Executive Order 13289. It recognizes those military service members who have deployed overseas in direct service to the War on Terror from September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined. Prior to April 30, 2005 the medal was awarded for service within Iraq and Afghanistan, but has been replaced with the Iraq Campaign Medal and Afghanistan Campaign Medal and now serves primarily as recognition for personnel who have deployed in support of the War on Terror to locations beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.

To be awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, a military service member must perform duty in a deployed status and must participate in designated anti-terrorism operation for a period of either 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days of duty. For those who were engaged in combat, killed, or wounded in the line of the duty the time requirement is waived.

The term "deployed status" indicates either temporary or permanent orders to a duty station outside the borders of the United States of America with such duty being in direct support of anti-terrorism operations. For a service member to receive the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the deployment must also have taken place in a nation which is currently recognized as a base for anti-terrorism operations by the United States Department of Defense.

On April 30, 2005 the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal was discontinued for service within Iraq and Afghanistan, such service now being recognized with the Iraq Campaign Medal and Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Personnel who received the GWOTEM for previous service in these two regions may elect to exchange the GWOTEM or retain the original award. In September 2010 a MILPER message re-authorized the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for Operation New Dawn.

The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal is a one time only award. Service stars are not authorized. The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal may be awarded with the Arrowhead device for qualified soldiers. The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal may be awarded with the combat operation insignia for qualified sailors assigned to Marine Corps units. The War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal was designed by John Sproston of the Army's Institute of Heraldry.



Picture of Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal and Ribbon

Looking for Volunteer Van Drivers

The van runs on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm. If you can volunteer to drive the DAV van at least 1 day a month, contact the office at 803-785-8400.



History of Independence Day

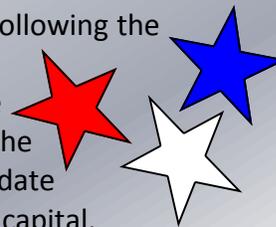


Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, commemorates the formal adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Declaration, written by a committee headed by Thomas Jefferson, is an eloquent statement of the American colonies' intention to become an independent nation. It broke the formal ties between the colonies and Britain after the American Revolution had begun. The Independence Day celebration is a reminder of the ideals on which the nation was founded.

Although the signing of the Declaration was not completed until August 1776, the Fourth of July holiday has been accepted as the official anniversary of U.S. independence. It was not declared a legal holiday until 1941, however. Today it is celebrated in all states and territories of the United States. The first celebration took place in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776, four days after the Declaration of Independence was adopted. On that day the declaration was read aloud, city bells rang, and bands played.

Within a few years the Fourth of July was observed throughout most of the new nation, although until 1783 the city of Boston, Massachusetts, commemorated Independence Day on March 5, the date of the Boston Massacre. An elaborate Fourth of July celebration was held in Philadelphia in 1788, following the ratification of the Constitution of the United States.

Several important U.S. projects were started on Independence Day. Work on the Erie Canal in New York state began on July 4, 1817. Construction of the first railroad in the United States, the Baltimore and Ohio, was started on July 4, 1828. July 4 was the date selected in 1848 for laying the cornerstone of the Washington Monument in the U.S. capital.



Vocational Rehabilitation Program continued from page 4

The rehabilitation plan will specify an employment or independent living goal, identify intermediate goals, and outline services and resources that VA will provide to assist the Veteran to achieve his / her goals. The VRC and the Veteran will work together to implement the plan to assist the Veteran to achieve his or her employment and / or independent living goals.

A Veteran found not to be entitled to services, the VRC will help him or her locate other resources to address any rehabilitation and employment needs identified during the evaluation. Referral to other resources may include state vocational rehabilitation programs; Department of Labor employment programs for disabled veterans; state, federal or local agencies providing services for employment or small business development; internet-based resources for rehabilitation and employment; and information about applying for financial aid.

SAVE THE DATE...

The 2012 Lexington County Veterans Parade is scheduled for Sunday, November 4th at 3pm in downtown Lexington. Please mark your calendars to join us for the 10th Annual Parade.



Veteran Service Organizations in Lexington County

Continued from page 7

We Need Your Help...

This is a list of the Veteran Service Organizations in Lexington County that we are aware of. Also, we have included meeting days, times and locations. Please help us in verifying the information we have and including any we don't have. If you know of any Veteran organization that is not on our list, please give us a call or email with the information and we will update the list.

Coming in the Next Issue...VA Life Insurance