



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

January/February 2014

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

At A Glance Calendar
January/February

Weekly on Tuesdays/January	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon
Wednesday, January 1st	New Years Day County Offices Closed/ No Van
Thursday, January 2nd	No Van
Friday, January 10th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, January 11th	Dang-It Doll Workshop @ Cayce Masonic Lodge from 10am-3pm
Tuesday, January 14th	County Council Meeting
Monday, January 20th	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day County Office Closed/ No Van
Tuesday, January 28th	County Council Meeting
Weekly on Tuesdays/January	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @12 noon
Thursday, February 6th	Gaston Outreach
Friday, February 7th	Chapin Outreach
Tuesday, February 11th	County Council Meeting
Friday, February 14th	Valentine's Day Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Monday, February 17th	President's Day County Office Closed/ No Van
Tuesday, February 25th	County Council Meeting

Purple—Holidays/Special Days
 Blue—Outreach dates
 Red—County Offices Closed, No van scheduled, and Special Notices
 Black—Director's appearances in the County
 Brown—County Council Meetings
 Pink—Special Events throughout the County
 Orange—Special event, Director Out of Office
 Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings

From the Director...

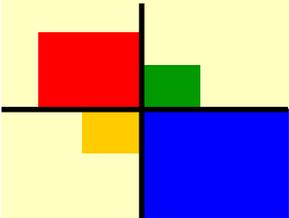
During the Christmas holidays I was reminded of how special family is. My children are all grown now and even though we all received many gifts, it was the time spent together that meant the most to me. As the New Year begins we give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. We are honored and privileged to serve the Veterans and survivors of Lexington County and we strive to provide quality customer service daily. We hope to improve on the number of Veterans we serve in 2014.

The South Carolina legislative session begins in January and I would like to direct your attention to a bill introduced by Representative Todd Atwater of the 87th district. It references that Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Martin Luther King Day should be school holidays in South Carolina. I hope you will call on him in support of this bill because I, too, think these should be school holidays. I have met some resistance to this from Trustee members who indicate they need flexibility with the school calendar. It is paramount that we honor our Veterans and support the Federal holiday so that our children can attend Veterans' Day parades and other patriotic events.

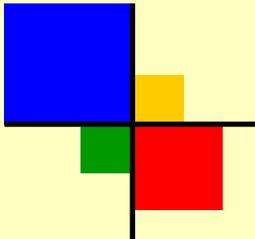
Please stop by our office or call to welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Joanne Schirato. We are pleased to have her on board with us and she is honored to work in our Department.

We are always looking for volunteers to drive our DAV van that transports Veterans with no means of transportation to their VA medical appointments. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer for one day a month or more, please call us at 785-8400. We also solicit volunteer Veterans to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at every County Council meeting and would be honored to have them do this. The Veteran is recognized by Council and a short biography is read at each meeting.





MILITARY RETIREMENT AND VA BENEFITS



Concurrent Receipt means to receive both military retirement benefits and VA disability compensation, and until 2004 this was forbidden by law. To receive a VA disability compensation, disabled military retirees had to waive all or part of their military pay.

Concurrent Receipt Overview

Qualified disabled military retirees get paid both their full military retirement pay and their VA disability compensation. This law phases out (over 10 years) the VA disability offset, which means that military retirees with 20 or more years of service and a 50% (or higher) VA rated disability, no longer have their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of their VA disability compensation. Those Veterans 40% and lower still have the offset because there has been no law passed to eliminate it.

Unlike the Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC), full concurrent receipt has been phased-in over the last nine years (except as noted above). This means that if you qualify you will see your retirement pay increase incrementally each year until the phase-in is complete on January 1, 2014.

Those members who have been rated less than 100 percent, but rated 100 percent disabled by the VA under the unemployability code (IU), will now receive CRDP. For more information on this please contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000.

Concurrent Receipt Eligibility:

To qualify for concurrent receipt you must:

1. Be a Military Retiree with 20 or more years of service, including:
2. Chapter 61 Medical Retirees with 20 years or more.
3. National Guard and Reserve with 20 or more good years. (Once they turn 60 and begin drawing a retirement check)
4. Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) Retirees may also be eligible.
5. Have a Service Related VA disability rating of 50% or higher.

The Value of the CRDP Benefit:

Your personal CRDP payment rate is determined by your current VA Disability Compensation waiver, minus the CRDP "Table Rate," then multiplied by the current CRDP "Phase Out" percentage. This makes it impossible to create a simple CRDP Payment Rate table that applies to everyone.

When fully phased in, CRDP will fully restore your military retirement pay and VA Disability Compensation payments. For example, a single retiree with a VA Rated service-connected disability could receive their full retirement pay in addition to over \$2,400 a month.

It is also important to note that the amount you receive cannot exceed the sum of your actual military retirement pay and VA Disability Compensation added together.

Combat-Related Special Compensation and Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay

Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay (CRDP) are programs created by Congress to allow eligible military retirees to receive monthly entitlements in addition to retired pay.

CRSC is a special compensation for combat-related disabilities. It is non-taxable, and retirees must apply to their Branch of Service to receive it.

CRDP is a restoration of retired pay for retirees with service-connected disabilities. It is taxed in the same manner as your retired pay, and it is normally considered taxable income. No application is required. Eligible retirees receive CRDP automatically provided they are receiving disability at the 50% or higher rate.

The purpose of these entitlements is to recover some or all of the retired pay that military retirees waive for VA disability compensation.

Monthly Payments

Like your retired pay, Defense Finance Accounting Services (DFAS) pays CRDP and CRSC monthly on the first business day of each month. You will receive your CRDP or CRSC payment in the same manner as your retired pay:

1. If your retired pay is being direct deposited into your bank account, VA will do the same for your CRDP or CRSC payment.
2. If your retired pay is sent to you as a paper check, VA will do the same for your CRDP or CRSC payment.

To verify your bank account information or check your mailing address prior to receiving your first payment, you may call Department of Defense Finance (DFAS) at: **1-800-321-1080**.

Retroactive Payments

DFAS and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manage the CRDP/CRSC Processing program (formerly known as VA Retro) to pay eligible military retirees any retroactive CRSC, CRDP and/or VA disability compensation they are owed. A retroactive payment will include any money you may have been entitled to before you received your first monthly payment. A retiree may be due funds from DFAS, the VA or from both agencies. DFAS and the VA remain in communication with each other to successfully establish and process CRDP and CRSC accounts.

DFAS will audit your account to determine whether or not you are due retroactive payment. An audit of your account requires researching pay information from both DFAS and VA. If you are due any money from DFAS, you will receive it within 30-60 days of receipt of your first CRSC or CRDP monthly payment.

If DFAS finds that you are also due a retroactive payment from the VA, they will forward an audit to the VA. They are responsible for paying any money they may owe you.

For more information from DFAS, call toll free at **1-800-321-1080**. Customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (ET).

Prints for Sale

We have several copies of the Veterans Memorial and Gibson Pond prints for sale in our office. The Gibson Pond print is 32x24 and the Monument print is 24x15. Both are suitable for framing. 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. Come by the office to have a closer look at the prints. Please stop by our office M-F from 8 to 5 to purchase one or more of these beautiful prints!



Looking for Volunteer Van Drivers

The van runs on Mondays, Wednesdays, and 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.



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 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400 if you are interested.



OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES

Please be aware that our outreach dates and times have changed. The correct dates and times are listed below. Appointments are strongly encouraged.



Batesburg/Leesville Outreach -
2nd Friday of the month at the
Batesburg/Leesville Library
from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Chapin Outreach - 1st Friday
of the month at the Chapin
Library from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach -
1st Thursday of the month at
the Gaston Library from 10
a.m. to 12 noon

Cayce/West Columbia Outreach
has been cancelled effective immediately due
to poor response.

DANG-IT DOLL REMINDER



There will be a Dang-It Doll workshop on Saturday, January 11th, from 10:00am until 3:00pm at the Cayce Masonic Lodge. The Lodge is located at 1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC 29033. The Lodge Brothers will be preparing their famous hot dog lunch.

To date, over 100,780 Dang-It Dolls have been shipped all over the world. There are volunteers ranging in age from 5 years to 90 years old. There is something for everyone to do. The more the merrier.

If there are any questions, contact Carol Davis with Operation Military Stress Relief Dolls, Inc., at 803-739-2774.

Lexington County Veterans Group

All Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 12 noon to 2:00 pm in the auditorium at 605 West Main Street, Lexington, SC. The group meets for Health Issues and PTSD counseling with a licensed Counselor.

Our Veterans also participate in various social activities such as group lunches, group dinners with wives/significant other, boat trips on Lake Murray, participation in the Lexington County Veterans parade, and other general group tours.

For further information, please contact the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office @ 803-785-8400.



"The soldier is the Army. No army is better than its soldiers. The soldier is also a citizen. In fact, the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one's country"

George S. Patton, Jr.



***The office would like to
say a big thank you to our
volunteer van drivers.***

Thanks for all you do!

List of Common Allowable (Recurring) Medical Expenses for an Initial Claim Application

The list below shows recurring VA allowable medical expenses for the initial claim application for pension benefits. The list is not all-inclusive and must be unreimbursed by insurance. They must be paid for by the applicant and are used to reduce outside income that exceeds the VA income limit.

1. Medicare Part B Premiums
2. Medicare Part D Premiums
3. Insurance Premiums for medical insurance
4. Home Health Services
5. Assisted Living Facility Services
6. Nursing Home Services
7. Long Term Care Insurance
8. Medical Monitoring Program (like Life Alert)

The Midlands Chapter of Blue Star Mothers presents
the 5th Annual



A Salute to South Carolina Patriots
Saturday, May 17, 2014

This event allows South Carolinians an opportunity to convey gratitude and support to our active and retired members of the United States Armed Forces. We recognize those who have dedicated their lives to the protection of our country and the preservation of our freedom and liberties.

The Palmetto Patriots' Ball is hosted by the Midlands Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. and is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization.



Mark Your Calendars

The 12th annual
Lexington County
Veterans Parade
will be held on
Sunday, November 2, 2014
at 3pm.

**GROUNDHOG
DAY**
February 2nd



For information and questions, please check out our webpage at
www.lex-co.sc.gov/departments/DeptRZ/va/Pages/index.aspx

We have also moved the
Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County to our Webpage.

Featured Medal:

Southwest Asia Service Medal

The Southwest Asia Service Medal (SASM) is a military award of the United States Armed Forces which was created by order of President George H.W. Bush on March 12, 1991. The award is intended to recognize those military service members who performed duty during the years of the Persian Gulf War. The medal was designed by Nadine Russell of the Army's Institute of Heraldry.

Individuals authorized the Southwest Asia Service Medal must have served in support of Operation Desert Shield or Desert Storm, in one or more of the following areas, between 2 August 1990 and 30 November 1995:

- ◇ Persian Gulf
- ◇ Red Sea
- ◇ Gulf of Oman
- ◇ Gulf of Aden
- ◇ that portion of the Arabian Sea that lies north of 10 degrees North latitude and west of 68 degrees East longitude
- ◇ Iraq
- ◇ Kuwait
- ◇ Saudi Arabia
- ◇ Oman
- ◇ Bahrain
- ◇ Qatar
- ◇ United Arab Emirates



Individuals serving in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Jordan (including the airspace and territorial waters) directly supporting combat operations between 17 January 1991 and 11 April 1991 are also eligible for this award.

To receive the award, a service member must be: attached to or regularly serving for one or more days with an organization participating in ground/shore military operations; attached to or regularly serving for one or more days aboard a naval vessel directly supporting military operations; actually participating as a crew member in one or more aerial flights directly supporting military operations in the areas designated; or serving on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days, except, if a waiver is authorized for personnel participating in actual combat.

For those service members who performed "home service" during the Persian Gulf War, such as support personnel in the United States, the Southwest Asia Service Medal is not authorized. The award is also not authorized for those who performed support of the Persian Gulf War from European or Pacific bases.

One bronze service star will be worn for participation in each designated campaign. Each recipient of the medal should wear at least one campaign star.

Coming in the Next Issue... National Guard and Reservists benefits and special adaptive housing