



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

November/December 2015



Lexington, SC.

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**At A Glance Calendar
November/December**

Weekly on Tuesdays in November	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon
Sunday, November 1st	Daylight Savings Time Begins Lex. County Veterans Parade
Tuesday, November 3rd	Election Day
Thursday, September 3rd	Gaston Outreach
Friday, September 4th	Chapin Outreach
Tuesday, November 10th	County Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 11th	Veterans Day County Offices Closed
Friday, November 13th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, November 14th	Dang-it Dolls Workshop in Cayce
Thursday, November 26th through Friday, November 27th	Thanksgiving Day County Offices Closed
Weekly on Tuesdays in December	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon
Thursday, December 3rd	Gaston Outreach
Friday, December 4th	Chapin Outreach
Sunday, December 6th	Hanukkah begins at Sundown
Tuesday, December 8th	County Council Meeting
Friday, December 11th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, December 12th	Wreaths Across America at Fort Jackson Cemetery
Monday, December 21st	Winter Begins
Thursday, December 24th through Friday, December 25th	Christmas Holidays County Offices Closed
Saturday, December 26th	Kwanzaa Begins
Monday, December 28th	Christmas Holiday County Offices Closed
Thursday, December 31st	New Year's Eve
Friday, January 1st, 2016	New Year's Day County Offices Closed No Chapin Outreach

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—Director Out of Office
 Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings

From the Director...

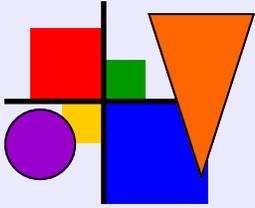
As I write these remarks South Carolina is embarking on recovering from the worst storms most of us have ever seen. My heart goes out to the folks who lost loved ones, their homes, possessions and businesses. The response from other states to help us recover warms my heart, as does all the help neighbors and strangers are providing for those in dire need. Volunteers have come from all over to help in any and every way possible and this is something that I think is deep inside everyone, the will to help fellow man when in need. There are many agencies associated with Veterans that are providing grants and financial assistance and we will be happy to share this when you call our office.

With November comes Veterans Day, a very special day for all of us in the office and we honor and salute all of our Veterans for their service to America. On Sunday, November 1st Lexington County hosts a Veterans Parade in downtown Lexington and we invite you to participate in the parade or to attend as a spectator. It will be comprised of Veterans service organizations, High School Bands, High School ROTC's, other civic groups and politicians. Please join us at 3pm with a flyover and then a special patriotic ceremony after the parade at the Veterans monument on South Lake Drive.

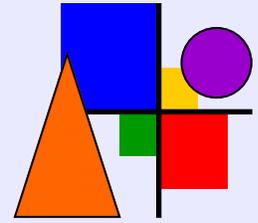
This issue has lots of free meals and other free or reduced items for Veterans to celebrate Veterans Day. Please ensure you check with these organizations first to ensure they are participating. The information we have was accurate at press time. Lastly, Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to all of you!

It is an honor to serve Lexington County!





Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) program may provide you with benefits in addition to, or instead of, your disability compensation if you have loss (or loss of use of) a limb, sight, speech, hearing, mobility, sexual organ or functioning, or if you have certain other disabilities. You may also be eligible for SMC if you are unable to leave your house or bed without help, or in need of regular help from another person in your daily activities. Extra VA disability or SMC is given for some especially serious disabilities. The basic idea is that the VA wants to give additional disability pay in cases where the disability is so severe that the regular ratings just aren't enough.

Unlike disability compensation, which compensates you for lost wages, SMC compensates you for non-economic losses, such as your personal inconvenience and loss of use of a body part, or body system. SMC is one of the most complex VA programs. SMC is difficult to understand and even experts in Veterans' benefits can find it confusing, so you are not alone if you find the SMC program difficult to figure out.



There are different categories that determine the type and amount of SMC. Each one has different requirements for the kind of conditions that qualify for SMC under that category. For a condition to qualify under any category, it must be determined by the VA to be a service connected disability. There are about 60 levels of SMC divided into nine letter categories: "K", "L", "M", "N", "O", "P", "R", "S", and "T". If you get SMC, the VA will tell you which of these categories of SMC you qualify for. Some of the letter categories also have in-between levels, which are shown by a "1/2" symbol after the letter. The December 2015 rates for a single Veteran range from \$103.23 to \$8318.95 per month. For a complete listing for the SMC rates visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/SMC. There is some specific terminology relating to SMC benefits. This terminology is explained below.



1 – Loss or Loss of Use is described as either an amputation or, having no effective remaining function of an extremity or organ. The disabilities VA can consider for SMC include:

- ◇ loss, or loss of use, of a hand or foot
- ◇ immobility of a joint or paralysis
- ◇ loss of sight of an eye (having only light perception)
- ◇ loss, or loss of use, of a reproductive organ
- ◇ complete loss, or loss of use, of both buttocks
- ◇ deafness of both ears (having absence of air and bone conduction)
- ◇ inability to communicate by speech (complete organic aphonia)
- ◇ loss of a percentage of tissue from a single breast, or both breasts, from mastectomy or radiation treatment

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2015 Veteran's Day Free Meals and Discounts

Two things to always remember during Veterans Day when using any of the free meals or discounts listed below:

1 - **Proof of Military Service:** First, most companies require some form of military ID – including a U.S. Uniform Services ID Card (active/reserve/retired), Current Leave and Earnings Statement (LES), Photograph in uniform, be wearing uniform (if your service permits), Veterans Organization Card (e.g., American Legion and VFW), DD214, discharge paperwork, or other form of identification. Other restaurants and companies may only require a photo of you in uniform, or go by the honor system.

2 – **Participation:** Second, always call ahead to verify locations, times, and participation. Many of the listed companies are franchises and may have different policies. We will do our best to keep this page updated as we find new information.



Discounts at Restaurants

Applebee's – Applebee's is again offering a free meal to military Veterans and active-duty service members on November 11th. There will be 7 entrées to choose from, beverage and gratuity not included. Military ID or proof of service is required. Last year over a million free meals were served.

Carraba's – free appetizer of your choice for active duty service members and Veterans. Military ID or proof of service is required.

 **Chili's** – Chili's is offering all military Veterans, past and present, their choice of one of seven meals during the dinner hour or any lunch combo. Offer is valid at participating Chili's in the U.S. only. Dine-in from limited menu only; beverages and gratuity not included. Veterans and active duty military simply show proof of military service.

Denny's – Free all you can eat pancakes from 6am to 2pm on Veterans Day for all active, retirees, and Veterans with a valid military ID or proof of service. Offer available in every Denny's nationwide.

FATZ – Free meal for current and former military members up to \$13 value. Proof of service is required.

Golden Corral –The 14th annual Golden Corral Military Appreciation Monday dinner is available to any person who has ever served in the United States Military. If you are a Veteran, retired, currently serving, in the National Guard or Reserves, you are invited to participate in Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Monday dinner. To date over four million free meals have been served.

free meal

Hooters –Hooters invites all Veterans and current servicemen and women to enjoy a free meal, up to \$10.99 in value with any drink purchase, by presenting a military ID or proof of service at any locations across the country.



Krispy Kreme – Free doughnut and small coffee available only at participating Krispy Kreme stores. Offer available to all active-duty, retirees & Veterans. Be sure to call ahead to verify your local Krispy Kreme is participating.

Little Caesars Pizza - Little Caesars is honoring the men and women of the United States Armed Forces this Veterans Day by providing Veterans and active military members with a free Crazy Bread with proof of military status or proof of service at participating stores nationwide.

Longhorn Steakhouse – Complimentary Texas Tonion and non-alcoholic beverage. Offer good for Veterans and active duty military members. Proof of service is required.

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2015 Veteran's Day Free Meals and Discounts - continued from page 4

McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurants – McCormick & Schmick's is celebrating their 16th annual Veteran's Appreciation Event on Sunday, November 9th with free lunch or dinner. Veterans will be able to choose a complimentary lunch or dinner entrée from a special menu. Veterans must provide proof of military service. Be sure to contact your local McCormick & Schmick's as this is valid at participating restaurants only. Space is limited and reservations are highly recommended.



Menchie's – All Veterans and current service members will receive a free 6oz frozen yogurt on November 11th. Proof of service required.

O'Charley's – Free entrée from the \$9.99 menu for all active duty and Veterans with proof of service

Olive Garden – All Veterans and military active duty will receive a free meal from a special menu on Veterans Day. Also, all November long, current military service members and their families get 10% their purchase in honor of Military Appreciation Month. Proof of service is required.

Outback Steakhouse – Outback Steakhouse is honoring America's military Veterans by offering active duty military and Veterans a free Bloomin' Onion and a non-alcoholic beverage to military personnel and Veterans with ID or proof of service. Also, receive 15% off your purchase from November 12th - December 31st.



Red Lobster – Free Appetizer on Veterans Day with Military ID or proof of service. Veterans may choose from a select list of appetizers.

Red Robin – Free Red's Tavern Double burger and bottomless steak fries for all Red Robin guests with military ID or proof of service. Red Robin is also partnering with Heinz for Veterans Days to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project. Red Robin will also donate \$10,000 to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Ryan's – On November 11th, active duty, reservists and retired military may enjoy a free dine-in lunch at participating Ryan's locations, from open until 3:30 pm. Show your military ID or proof of service to enjoy the free meal.

Shoney's – On November 11th, Shoney's will be having a Veterans Day free meal that consists of a free All-American Burger. This is for Veterans as well as active duty military. Proof of military service is required and it's for dine-in only.

Starbucks – Free tall brewed coffee for active duty, Veterans and their spouses at participating stores only.

Texas Roadhouse – Every Texas Roadhouse location across the country will participate in the free lunch event to honor the men and women of our armed forces. Choose from one of 10 free meals, plus sides and a drink. Offer good for All Veterans – including all active, retired or former U.S. military. Dine-in only and ID Required.

T.G.I. Friday's – Free Lunch for all current military members and Veteran from 11:00am to 2:00pm. Valid ID or proof of service required. Dine-in only at participating locations.



Uno Chicago Grill – Free individual pizza or entrée with purchase of a pizza or entrée of equal or greater value. Available for all active duty and Veterans. No coupon is necessary; proof of service required. Don't forget to tell the staff you are there that day to support Fisher House, and a portion of your party's check will go to benefit the Fisher House Foundation, an awesome military charity.

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2015 Veteran's Day Free Meals and Discounts - continued from page 5

Home Improvement Discounts

Home Depot - The Home Depot is offering a 10% discount for all Veterans on Veterans Day. Proof of service is required.



Lowe's – Lowes is offering a 10% discount for all Veterans on Veterans Day (this also includes immediate family). Proof of service is required.

Retail Stores & More

Big Lots – 10% off all purchases with valid military ID, November 9th – 11th.

Bed, Bath & Beyond – 20% off in store purchases, November 9th – 11th.

Build-A-Bear Workshop – 20% off entire purchase.

Char-Broil – Get 10% off site wide on orders over \$75 at Char-Broil! Offer ends November 15th and anyone can use the offer. Code: A14VET

Dollar General – Veterans, active military members and their families will get 11% off their in-store or online purchase on Veterans Day.

JC Penny – Anyone with a military ID or proof of service will receive 20% off their purchases November 3rd – 15th; in-store only.

Sleep Number Beds – From October 14th – November 16th Sleep Number is providing exclusive offers for current and past military personnel. You could save \$400 - \$700 on selected Sleep Number mattress sets.

Sam's Club - Sam's Club continues to honor military veterans from November 9th – 11th with an annual cane giveaway. In collaboration with AMG Medical, 36,000 free folding canes will be distributed to Veterans in need of mobility assistance. "Hugo Salutes Our Veterans" will distribute Hugo Folding Canes (retail value: \$29.99) at all U.S. Sam's Club locations. Sam's Club Membership is not required, but proof of U.S. military service is required to be eligible.



Free Services

Free Car Washes – Grace for Vets is a non-profit organization who has gotten together independent car wash operators to offer Veterans a free car wash in thousands of locations on Veterans Day. Find a list of the participating car washers at Grace for Vets.

Free Haircuts at Great Clips – Veterans and active/inactive/retired military members can stop into Great Clips on November 11th and get a free haircut or pickup a free haircut card to use before the end of the year. Anyone can stop in to get their haircut and receive a free haircut card that they can give to a Veteran.



Free Haircuts at Sports Clips – Veterans and active duty US service members can stop in at Sports Clips on November 11th to get a free haircut.

Free Night Lodging at B&B's – Veterans can stay the night at over 200 participating B&B's and inns around the country Veterans Day. Reservations for your free stay can be made now and are available while supplies last. For more information visit B&B's for Vets.

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2015 Veteran's Day Free Meals and Discounts continued from page 6

Free Park Admissions for Veterans Day



Colonial Williamsburg – Veterans, service members and dependents of currently deployed troops can get free admission tickets to the park from November 7th – 11th.

Free Entrance Into National Parks – This freebie is in honor of Veterans Day but everyone can take part in it. Over 100 national parks will waive admission fees on November 11th in honor of Veteran's Day.

Knotts Berry Farm– Knott's Berry Farm continues its tradition of honoring the brave men and women who have served in the U.S. military, both past and present, with free admission during its 25th annual Military Tribute. The free -admission offer applies to all U.S. Veterans, retired and active military personnel and one guest. Up to six additional tickets may be purchased at Knott's Ticket Booths for only \$24 each from November 2 through 21 and for \$29 each from November 22 through January 4, 2015. U.S. Veterans, retired and active military personnel must present military ID or proof of U.S. military service at Knott's ticket booths to receive the complimentary tickets. Veterans, retired and active military personnel must be present.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment – Veterans get 50% off tickets now through November 11th. The tickets must be used by December 21st. Veterans promotion includes SeaWorld Orlando, SeaWorld Antonio, SeaWorld San Diego, Busch Gardens Tampa, Busch Gardens Williamsburg, and Sesame Place Langhorne. The program does not include Discovery Cove in Orlando or Aquatica, SeaWorld's Water Park. Active duty military members who have already used their free admission for the year can also get 50% off tickets.



Veteran Ticket Foundation – Get free tickets to sporting event, movies, shows and more by visiting www.vettix.org.

THANKSGIVING DAY



Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated primarily in the United States and Canada as a day of giving thanks. In the United States, the modern Thanksgiving holiday tradition is commonly, but not universally, traced to a sparsely documented 1621 celebration at Plymouth in present-day Massachusetts. The 1621 Plymouth feast and thanksgiving was prompted by a good harvest. Pilgrims and Puritans who began emigrating from England in the 1620s and 1630s carried the tradition of Days of Fasting and Days of Thanksgiving with them to New England. George Washington proclaimed the first nationwide thanksgiving celebration in America marking November 26, 1789, "as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God".

Thanksgiving in the United States was observed on various dates throughout history. From the time of the Founding Fathers until the time of Lincoln, the date Thanksgiving was observed varied from state to state. The final Thursday in November had become the customary date in most U.S. states by the beginning of the 19th century. Thanksgiving was first celebrated on the same date by all states in 1863 by a presidential proclamation of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln proclaimed the date to be the final Thursday in November in an attempt to foster a sense of American unity between the Northern and Southern states. Because of the ongoing Civil War and the Confederate States of America's refusal to recognize Lincoln's authority, a nationwide Thanksgiving date was not realized until Reconstruction was completed in the 1870s. On December 26, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint resolution of Congress changing the national Thanksgiving Day from the last Thursday in November to the fourth Thursday.



IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION

The van runs on certain Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm. Currently, we have very few van drivers and are running the van on a limited schedule.

If you need to schedule a ride on the DAV van, please call the office for dates and space availability.



**WE ARE LOOKING
FOR VOLUNTEER
VAN DRIVERS!!!**

We presently only have three drivers and are desperate for new drivers.

If you are 18 or older or know someone who may be interested in volunteering to drive the DAV van at least one day a month, please contact the office at 803-785-8400.

The Van is running the following dates in November and December:

Monday, November 2nd
Wednesday, November 4th
Monday, November 9th
Monday, November 16th
Wednesday, November 18th
Monday, December 7th
Wednesday, December 9th
Monday, December 14th



Please call the office for space availability on these dates.

The History of Mary Edwards Walker



Famed physician, Army surgeon, feminist, women's rights activist and Civil War Veteran, Mary Edwards Walker is best known for becoming the first woman to receive the Medal of Honor. She's also known for her work as an outspoken women's rights activist, for seeking to change the restrictive styles of women's fashions of her day, and for refusing to be held back by her gender.

Born on November 26, 1832, in Oswego, New York, Mary pursued a career in a traditionally male field. She enrolled at Syracuse Medical College, graduating with a Doctor of Medicine degree in 1855.

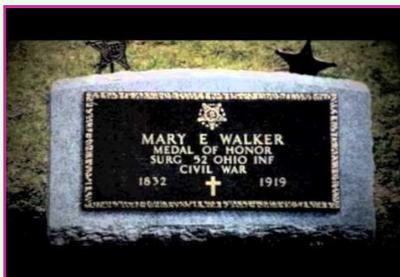
Soon after the Civil War began in 1861, Walker began volunteering as a nurse, working early on at the Patent Office Hospital in Washington, D.C. She took a break from volunteering her services in 1862 to earn a degree from the New York Hygeio-Therapeutic College in New York City, but soon returned to the war effort.

This time, she worked on the battlefield, in tent hospitals in Warrenton and Fredericksburg, Virginia. In the fall of 1863, Walker traveled to Tennessee, where she was appointed assistant surgeon, in the Army of the Cumberland, by General George H. Thomas, one of the principal commanders in the Civil War's Western Theater. She worked as a field surgeon near the Union front lines for almost two years (including Fredericksburg and in Chattanooga after the Battle of Chickamauga), then was appointed assistant surgeon of the 52nd Ohio Infantry.

She continually crossed Confederate lines to treat civilians, and in 1864, dressed in full uniform, she accidentally walked into a group of Rebel soldiers just south of the Georgia-Tennessee border. She was captured and imprisoned by the Confederate Army at Castle Thunder prison near Richmond, Va. After four months of imprisonment, she was released that August, during a prisoner exchange, and Walker was greatly pleased that she had been traded "man for man," for a Confederate Officer.



Following her release, Walker briefly returned to Washington, D.C. and soon began supervising a hospital for women prisoners and then an orphanage. Mary Walker retired from government service in June 1865. Later that year, in recognition of her courageous war efforts, she was awarded the Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service by President Andrew Johnson, becoming the first woman to receive the honor.



After the Civil War, Walker lectured on such issues as dress reform and women's suffrage, but did not support a proposed suffrage amendment, contending that the right to vote was already contained in the Constitution.

In an unfortunate turn of events, in 1917, the U.S. government changed the criteria for the Medal of Honor, restricting it to those who had engaged in actual combat with the enemy. Hundreds of medals, including Walker's, were rescinded. She refused to return hers, however, and wore it proudly until her death on February 21, 1919, in Oswego, New York. Nearly 60 years after her death, in 1977, Mary Walker's Medal of Honor was posthumously restored by President Jimmy Carter. Nearly a century later, Mary Walker remains the only female Medal of Honor recipient.

Throughout her 87 years Mary Edwards Walker combined her vocation as a doctor with a passion for writing, agitating for social reforms -- particularly women's rights --, journalism, lecturing, and tinkering with inventions. She wrote extensively, including a combination biography and commentary called "Hit". With her caustic wit she quipped, "You men are not our protectors... If you were, who would there be to protect us from?"



Are You in NEED of Home Repairs?



Weatherization Assistance Program...Working in your Community

'Making Communities Stronger, One Family at a time!'

Obtain needed repairs to your home through grant programs. The Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation & Weatherization Program is available to make repairs for low-medium income homeowners. Available to Veterans or Active Duty Members of any branch of the US military that are currently serving, have served, or their surviving spouse.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

INCOME GUIDELINES:

Must identify and verify all sources of income for each household member. Verification of income must be within 90 days of submission.

STATEMENT FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTION:

Must submit last two (2) months of bank statements for all accounts.

PROPERTY TAX:

Must be paid current.

OWN OR BUYING A HOME:

Must have thirty (30) days ownership.

COPY OF DEED:

Must be registered and recorded.

DD 214:

Or other proof of service.

Contact Capital Rehab Management (Joyce Pue) at 803.661.5772 (O) or 803.261.5772 (C)

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) continued from page 3

2 – Aid and attendance means that the condition is so severe that it requires regular (not necessarily constant) supervision by another person. This person could be a family member, home nurse, or nursing home facility. Hospitalization does NOT qualify as aid and attendance.

3 – Permanently bedridden means that the condition is so severe that the individual cannot get out of bed. This does not include periods of bed rest prescribed by a physician since the individual could still actually get out of bed. Unlike aid and attendance, if an individual is permanently bedridden the rating continues even if they are hospitalized.

The VA will pay higher rates for combinations of these disabilities such as loss or loss of use of the feet, legs, hands, and arms, in specific monetary increments, based on the particular combination of the disabilities. There are also higher payments for various combinations of severe deafness with bilateral blindness. Additional SMC is available if a Veteran is service connected for paraplegia, with complete loss of bowel and bladder control. In addition, if you have other service-connected disabilities that, in combination with the above special monthly compensation, meet certain criteria, a higher amount of SMC can also be considered.

You should contact our office or your local VA regional office for information about applying for SMC. In determining qualifications for SMC, the VA must review the medical evidence regarding the loss or loss of use and then make a decision regarding the level of SMC to be paid.



SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING PROGRAM

The Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program offers grants to certain service members and Veterans with severe service-connected disabilities to assist them in building, remodeling, or purchasing an adapted home.

WHAT IS A SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING (SAH) GRANT?

The SAH grant is designed to help disabled Veterans by providing a barrier-free living environment, such as a wheelchair accessible home, that affords Veterans a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy. Veterans and service members with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs, up to the current maximum of \$70,465. The SAH grant is available to certain Veterans and service members who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

1. Loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or
2. Blindness in both eyes, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, or
3. Loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with (1) residuals of organic disease or injury, or (2) the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity, affecting balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair or,
4. Loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at or above the elbows, or
5. A severe burn injury.



WHAT IS A SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION (SHA) GRANT?

The SHA grant can be used to increase the mobility of eligible Veteran and service members throughout their residences. Veterans and service members with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to this type of grant, up to the current maximum of \$14,093. The SHA grant is available to certain Veterans and service members who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

1. Blindness in both eyes with 20/200 visual acuity or less in the better eye with the use of a standard correcting lens or,
2. The anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow, or
3. A severe burn injury.

WHAT IS A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ASSISTANCE (TRA) GRANT?

A temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and service members who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$30,934 and for the SHA grant is \$5,523.

WHAT IS A HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS (HISA) GRANT

Veterans and service members may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. A Veteran may receive a HISA grant in conjunction with either a SAH or SHA grant. The HISA program is available for both Veterans with service-connected disabilities and Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities. Home improvement benefits up to \$6,800 may be provided to Veterans with service-connected disabilities and up to \$2,000 may be provided to Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You can apply by completing VA Form 26-4555, Veterans Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant, and submitting it to your local VA Regional Loan Center. You may also apply online; please visit the Veteran's portal at www.ebenefits.va.gov to register and submit an application for Specially Adapted Housing benefits.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of November/December?



November 1, 1950 - President Truman was the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt.



November 2, 1734 - American frontiersman, Daniel Boone was born near Reading, Pennsylvania.



November 7, 1944 - President Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented fourth term.

November 10, 1775 - The U.S. Marine Corps was established as part of the U.S. Navy.



November 12, 1867 - A major eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Italy began.



November 17, 1800 - Congress met for the first time in the new capital at Washington, D.C.



November 19, 1493 - Puerto Rico was discovered by Columbus.

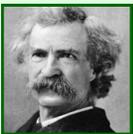
November 23, 1859 - William H. Bonney (Billy the Kid) was born in New York City.



November 24, 1874 - Joseph Glidden patented his invention of barbed wire.



November 26, 1832 - The first female surgeon in the US Army, Mary Edwards Walker was born in Oswego, New York.

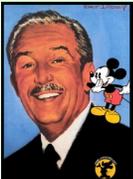


November 30, 1835 - American author, Samuel Clemens was born in Florida, Missouri. He wrote books under the pen name Mark Twain.

December 2, 1804 - Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned Emperor of France.



December 5, 1901 - Walt Disney was born in Chicago, Illinois.



December 8, 1980 - Former Beatle musician, John Lennon was assassinated.

December 16, 1944 - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began.



December 18, 1865 - The 13th Amendment was ratified abolishing slavery.



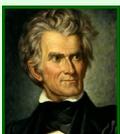
December 21, 1945 - General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident.



December 27, 1822 - French chemist-bacteriologist, Louis Pasteur was born in Dole, France.



December 28, 1832 - John C. Calhoun became the first American ever to resign the office of vice president.



December 29, 1890 - Members of the U.S. 7th Cavalry massacred more than 200 Sioux men, women and children at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota.



December 30, 1803 - The Stars and Stripes flag was raised over New Orleans as the United States took formal possession of the territory of Louisiana, an area of 885,000 square miles, nearly doubling the size of the U.S.



Camp Lejeune Updates

As part of the VA's ongoing commitment to provide care to Veterans and their families, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it will start the process of amending its regulations to establish presumptions of service connection for certain conditions resulting from exposure to contaminated drinking water at the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina.



This process is in addition to the healthcare the VA already provides for 15 conditions to eligible Veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, as a result of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. The VA also provides reimbursement of healthcare expenses for those 15 conditions to eligible family members who resided at Camp Lejeune during that time period.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently met with senators and the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to discuss the creation of presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The diseases that are currently being reviewed for potential presumptive service connection include kidney cancer, angiosarcoma of the liver, and acute myelogenous leukemia, which are known to be related to long-term exposure to the chemicals that were in the water at Lejeune from the 1950s through 1987. The chemicals are Benzene, Vinyl Chloride, Trichloroethylene and Perchloroethylene, which are known as volatile organic compounds, used in industrial solvents and components of fuels.

The VA will also work with ATSDR and potentially the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the body of scientific knowledge and research related to exposure to these chemicals and the subsequent development of other diseases. The VA will carefully consider all public comments received when determining the final scope of any presumptions.

Veterans with health problems they believe are related to exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune may file a claim for disability compensation online at www.ebenefits.va.gov, or visit their local VA office.



For more information, Veterans and family members should contact the nearest VA healthcare facility by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune. For further information on Camp Lejeune: VHA Office of Public Health has a website on Camp Lejeune historical water contamination at: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp.

The U.S. Marine Corps encourages all those who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune before 1987 to register for notifications regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater>.



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 in Lexington. The group meets for Health Issues and PTSD counseling with a licensed counselor.

The Veterans group also participates 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 at 803-785-8400.



Upcoming Events for the Group

The Vietnam Veterans of the group will be participating as grand marshals for the Lexington County Veterans Parade on November 1st.

The group has purchased 10 wreaths from Wreaths Across America and they will be placing them on graves at Ft. Jackson Cemetery on December 12th. They will also be placing two wreath inserts on the graves of former group members buried at Ft. Jackson.

Dang-it Dolls Workshops

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
AS THIS IS THE LAST WORKSHOP
FOR THE YEAR!!**

Saturday, November 14, 2015

from 10am to 3pm

at the Cayce Masonic Lodge,
1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.



There is something for everyone to do and this is the one place where

THE MORE THE MERRIER
really counts.

FLU SHOTS

Seasonal flu shots are now available for all registered and enrolled Veterans at DORN VA hospital.



Veterans can receive the flu shot during their regularly scheduled Primary Care or Specialty Care appointments or Primary Care Walk-in visits. Walk-ins are accepted Monday through Friday (except for Federal Holidays) between the hours of 8am to 4pm.

Walgreens



Veterans may also obtain their flu shot at any Walgreens location. The Veteran must show their VA medical ID card.

*"Throughout the course of American history,
courageous men and women
have taken up arms
to secure, defend, and maintain these core principles
upon which our Nation's freedoms depend."*

- George Bush



Military Service and Social Security Benefits

Your Social Security benefit depends on your earnings, averaged over your working lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your Social Security benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes. The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.



If you served in the military after 1956, you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for periods of active duty from 1957 through 2001 can also be credited to your Social Security earnings record for benefit purposes.

- ◇ **From 1957 through 1967**, Social Security will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- ◇ **From 1968 through 2001**, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.
- ◇ **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

The information below explains how you can get credit for special earnings and applies only to active duty military service earnings from 1957 through 2001.

- ◇ **From 1957 through 1977**, you are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.
- ◇ **From 1978 through 2001**, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.
- ◇ **If you served in the military from 1940 through 1956**, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940, through December 31, 1956, under the following circumstances:

1. You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or
2. You are still on active duty; or
3. You are applying for survivors benefits and the Veteran died while on active duty.



You cannot receive credit for these special earnings if you are already receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period. These extra earnings credits are added to your earnings record when you apply for Social Security benefits.

NOTE: *In all cases, the additional earnings are credited to the earnings that Social Security averages over your working lifetime, not directly to your monthly benefit amount.*

Happenings Around Lexington County

During the Month of November

Sunday, November 1st

Lexington County Veterans Parade
For more information contact Sharon Willis @ 803-785-1454.



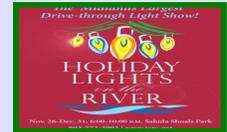
Friday, November 20th through
Wednesday, November 30th

Lights Before Christmas at Riverbanks Zoo
5 to 9pm. (closed 11/26, 12/24 & 12/25) For more information visit their website at riverbanks.org/events/lights-before-Christmas.



Wednesday, November 25th through
Thursday, December 31st

Holiday Lights on the River at Saluda Shoals
6 to 10pm For more information visit their website at iric.net/holiday-lights.



During the Month of December

Friday, December 4th through
Sunday, December 6th

Town of Lexington's Snowball Festival
For more information contact Jennifer Dowden, Events & Media Coordinator at 803-356-8238.



Saturday, December 12th

Lexington Leisure Center Christmas Sampler
9 to 3pm. For information call 803-957-7828.



Saturday, December 12th

Tri-City Leisure Center Christmas Peddler
9 to 3pm. For information call 803-939-9309.



Saturday, December 12th

West Metro Holiday Parade of Lights
Starts at 5:30pm. For more information contact the Cayce/West Columbia Chamber at 803-794-6504.



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

A list of the
Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County
and copies of the newsletter are also on our webpage.



LEXINGTON INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICES

2015 Holiday Basket Wish List

- Ham or Turkey (frozen or canned)
- Canned Sweet Potatoes
- Canned Collards
- Stuffing Mix
- Cranberry Sauce
- Cornbread Mix
- Green Beans
- Dessert Mix (Complete kit)



Please deliver to LICS by the following dates:

Thanksgiving: Wednesday, November 11th

Christmas: Wednesday, December 9th

Questions? Anna Smith
Director of Community Relations
Extension 228 | anna@licssc.org

You may pack a basket or box and bring it completed, or simply bring the items and we will prepare. Feel free to add a personal note or prayer for the family.

"The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40

216 HARMON STREET, LEXINGTON SC 29072
803 957 6656 | 803 957 3414 fax | www.licssc.org





More information on C-123 Aircraft Agent Orange Exposure Claims



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has determined that a select group of Air Force and Air Force Reserve personnel were exposed to herbicides through regular and repeated duties as ground, flight, or medical crew members on contaminated Operation Ranch Hand (ORH) C-123 aircraft that were used to spray Agent Orange in Vietnam.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any Air Force Veteran or Air Force Reservist who was assigned to one of the affected Reserve or active duty units as a ground, flight, or medical crew member on a contaminated aircraft and later developed a disability that has been linked to Agent Orange exposure should file a claim. VA has information indicating that few Air Force units (active duty and Reserve) had one or more of the contaminated aircraft during the period 1969 through 1986 (depending upon unit of assignment). VA compiled a list of these units and the dates on which they had the aircraft, which is publicly available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/residue-c123-aircraft/index.asp

Claimants are encouraged to apply online through the eBenefits portal. You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-526EZ, Fully Developed Claim (Compensation). Please ensure that each C-123 related disability is specifically annotated (e.g., Diabetes/C-123) on *Part II, Block 14* of VA Form 21-526, or *Section I, Block 11* of VA Form 21-526EZ. Also, if you have any of the following material, please submit it with your application:

- Discharge, separation papers (DD214 or equivalent)
- USAF Form 2096 (unit where assigned at the time of the training action)
- USAF Form 5 (aircraft flight duties)
- USAF Form 781 (aircraft maintenance duties)
- Dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates)
- Medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports)

War Dog Memorial to be Dedicated in November

The capital city is on target to get a new war memorial. This one will be dedicated to the dogs who serve or served in the military.

The bronze statue is a bit larger than life size and weighs 2,000 pounds. It was designed by renowned Illinois bronze artist, Renee Bemis. The replica shows the dog handler and the German Shepherd on point. It will sit on the bank just below where the current Vietnam memorial stands. This will be the largest war dog memorial in the entire United States.

The Monument is set to travel to North Carolina in October stopping at military bases along the way to South Carolina where it will be placed in its permanent home. The dedication is set to be on Veterans day this coming November. Founders hope to break ground and begin building the plaza where the statue will sit in September.

For more information and to donate to the War Dog Memorial Fund visit their webpage, www.wardogmemorialfund.com/donate.



DID YOU KNOW...

The VAMC Dorn now has a food pantry. Any Veteran in need may participate in the program. He or she must contact Voluntary Services and they will direct you to the food pantry. To contact Voluntary Services call (803) 776-4000 extension 6780.



**Remember to
turn your
clock back
November 1st!**

Broad stripes and bright stars.... gave proof....

that our flag was still there. Broad stripes and bright stars ...

Veteran

I was a proud veteran
That served my country well
To those that would listen
I had many stories to tell.

We fought for America's freedom
In far away places on foreign land.
Wherever the battle for democracy raged,
America's finest made a stand.

We fought for your future
And the right to remain free.
For we saw what freedom meant
To those not blessed with Liberty.

For you and yours
We would gladly have given our life.
We faced the fears and perils of battle
We braved endless turmoil and strife.

Please remember us veterans
And the sacrifices we made for you.
Please share the blessings of freedom,
Proudly wave the red, white and blue.

Lynne Carey
Copyright 2004

gave proof ... that our flag was still there.



Falling Behind in Your Mortgage/ Worried about Foreclosure?

SOUTH CAROLINA LEGAL SERVICES

SC HELP- approved Housing Processing Agency

MAY BE ABLE TO HELP AT NO COST

Homeowners worried about foreclosure due to reduction in income caused by unemployment or underemployment, reduction in self-employment income, death of a spouse, catastrophic medical expenses or divorce May Be Eligible for one or more of the following programs administered by SC HELP:

MONTHLY PAYMENT ASSISTANCE :

pays mortgage up to \$36,000 or 24 months whichever comes first while homeowner is seeking employment and a return to self-sustainability

DIRECT LOAN "CATCH UP" ASSISTANCE:

pays up to \$36,000 on past due mortgage to bring current; provided, homeowner can now maintain pay monthly payments

•MPA & DLA are both 5 year forgivable loans if you continue to reside in property



COMBINATION OF MONTHLY AND DIRECT ASSISTANCE:

pays past due mortgage up to \$25,000 and makes monthly payments for a combined total of \$36,000

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE FOR DEED-IN-LIEU OR SHORT-SALE:

provides \$5,000 grant to help transition families from homeownership to rental housing if:

1. Application with SC HELP completed FIRST
2. Permission for short-sale or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure granted by mortgage company
3. Money distributed AFTER execution of deed completed

How To APPLY

South Carolina Legal Services:

1 888 257 1988

Or

1 855 435 7472

Apply online at

www.SCHELP.gov



South Carolina
Legal Services

Balancing the Scales of Justice

Andrea E. Loney, Esquire
Executive Director
2109 Bull Street, P.O. Box 1445, Columbia, SC29201
Email: andrealoney@sclegal.org
Fax: 803-744-4191
www.sclegal.org

SC HELP
Mortgage help for homeowners.



South Carolina Legal Services

Balancing the Scales of Justice

Andrea E. Loney, Esquire
Executive Director
2109 Bull Street | P.O. Box 1445 | Columbia, South Carolina 29201
Email: andrealoney@sclegal.org Fax: (803) 799-9420
www.sclegal.org | www.lawhelp.org/sc | www.probono.net/sc



South Carolina Homeownership
and Employment Lending Program

300-C Outlet Pointe Boulevard
Columbia, South Carolina 29210
www.scmortgagehelp.com

Pre-Registration Information

South Carolina Homeownership and Employment Lending Program have been awarded \$295,431,200 in funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. South Carolina Legal Services will help you gather and submit the documents to apply for mortgage assistance.

1. Full name _____
2. Complete Mailing Address _____
3. Email Address _____ Telephone Number _____
Cell phone Number _____
4. Do you or the co-borrower own and live in the property as a primary residence? _____
5. Was your original first mortgage amount less than \$729,750? _____
6. What is the name of your mortgage company? _____
7. Is your mortgage current or delinquent? _____
8. Are you or the co-borrower unemployed? _____
9. If yes, are you getting unemployment compensation? _____
10. If you are no longer getting unemployment compensation, when did it stop? _____
11. If still employed, please give your anticipated date of termination or reduction in hours? _____
12. Have you or the co-borrower had a significant reduction in your income? _____
13. Why was the income reduced? _____

14. Are you able to complete an online application? _____

How to Apply:

Fax this Form to: 803 799 9420

Call:

SOUTH CAROLINA LEGAL SERVICES

1 888 257 1988

Or

855 HELP 4 SC

Submit an application at

www.SCHelp.com



**Lexington County
Offices
will be closed on the
following dates:**

- November 11th - Veterans Day**
- November 26th - Thanksgiving Day**
- November 27th - Day After
Thanksgiving**
- December 24th - Christmas Eve**
- December 25th - Christmas Day**
- December 28th - Christmas Holiday**
- January 1st - New Year's Day**



VA Eliminates Net Worth as Health Care Eligibility Factor

Elimination of Net Worth Makes More Veterans Eligible for Health Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, the VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Robert A. McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

"Everything that we do and every decision we make has to be focused on the Veterans we serve," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "We are working every day to earn their trust. Changing the way we determine eligibility to make the process easier for Veterans is part of our promise to our Veterans."

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Veterans may submit updated income information at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility. For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).



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.



The Magic of Christmas

By Tom Krause

“Joy to the World”, the carolers sang out as last minute shoppers scurried about desperately seeking that one special gift that would give Christmas morning a magical lift.

An old man stood standing listening to song, midst all the madness of the bustling throng, in a shaky hoarse voice he began to join in singing the words of the famous old hymn.

One by one people stopped with their madness to join with the old man for a moment of gladness. By the time the carolers finished with singing the song the whole throng was united as they all sang along.

As if by magic from out of the sky church bells rang out from a chapel near by. And when it was over the people greeted each other with messages of good will they shared with one another.

You see that magical lift the shoppers sought for so long was not in the buying or scurrying along. That magical gift so desperately sought was the Spirit of Christmas – which could never be bought.

OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES



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

Chapin Outreach is the 1st Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 10a.m. to 12 noon.



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



Please note the change in time for Chapin Outreach.

Appointments are strongly encouraged. Call the office at 803-785-8400 to schedule a time.

THERE WILL BE NO OUTREACH IN CHAPIN ON JANUARY 1, 2016.

November is... National Diabetes & Alzheimer's Disease Month



December is... National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

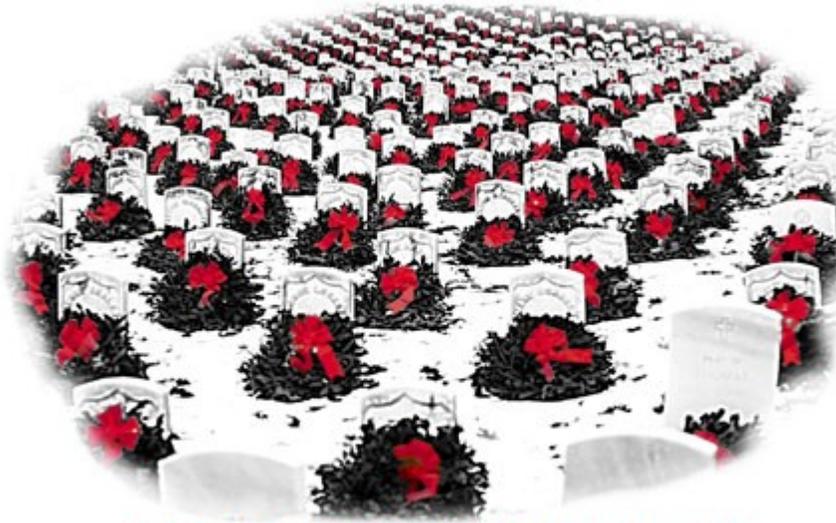
Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

Support Matters.



Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Confidential help for Veterans and their families



WREATHS-ACROSS-AMERICA.ORG
REMEMBER - HONOR - TEACH

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and others who had helped with their annual Christmas wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America™, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. This nonprofit organization continues the Arlington tradition as part of its mission to Remember, Honor and teach.

In 2014, Wreaths Across America and our national network of volunteers laid over 700,000 memorial wreaths at over 1000 locations in the United States and beyond. We accomplished this with help from 2047 fundraising groups, many corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. Our annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery is known as the world's largest Veteran's parade, stopping at schools, monuments, Veteran's homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.

Proceeds place a wreath at one of the participating cemeteries; help support our fundraising partners, educational and Veteran's services outreach. Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and **no** wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

We welcome all to join us at any Wreaths Across America ceremony. If you would like to participate or help bring sponsored wreaths to your local community, please contact us and we will help connect you with other groups already working in your area.

Schedule of Events

Sunday, December 6, 2015

Start of World's Longest Veterans Parade from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery and participating locations.

Monday, December 7, 2015 at 12:00noon

SC State House ceremony at the SC Veterans Memorial on the Assembly St side of State House.

Saturday December 12, 2015 at 12:00noon

Ft. Jackson National Cemetery 4170 Percival Rd. Columbia, SC 29229

Parking will be at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking lot across for the cemetery entrance on Percival Rd. Shuttle buses w/handicap provisions will bring everyone into the cemetery starting at 10:30am.

For more information contact Carol Davis by email waftjackson@yahoo.com or call (803) 739-2774.



Wreath Sponsorship Form Fort Jackson National Cemetery

FOR EVERY 2 WREATHS PURCHASED ON THIS FORM THE CEMETERY WILL RECEIVE A 3RD ONE FREE
 If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction. www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org
 Be sure to use cemetery code SCFJNC and Fundraising Group ID SC0015

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Please make checks payable to:
Wreaths Across America TM
 PO Box 3358
 West Columbia, SC 29171
 Questions? Please call 803-730-2774
 Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual- 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card- If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
Family- 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business- 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate- 100 Wreaths	\$1500.00		
Merchandise available on WAA Website			
		Grand Total	

****SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS****

In Honor of:

Please provide email of "In Honor OF" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (If you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

Email: _____

Mailing: _____

In Memory of:

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

Branch of Service: _____

Rank: _____

State: _____

Please note that all sponsorships are sent directly to the location and no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: SCFJNC Fundraising Group ID: SC0015

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Cash \$: _____ Total\$: _____ Date: _____

Total # Checks: _____ Reconciled: _____

MO \$: _____

Entered: _____

GEN: _____



Did you know...

During the fiscal year 2015 the Dorn VA Medical Center served 82,000 Veterans and hired 240 new positions?

Looking for a job?

The VA medical center and regional office is hiring Veterans. Visit USAjobs.com for more information.



American Red Cross

Emergency Communication Services

Serving active duty service members and their families, DoD civilians and families serving overseas, National Guard and Reserves, and veterans.

1-877-272-7337



News from VAMC Dorn

A new three story parking structure will be built on the VAMC Dorn campus. Construction is to begin in the Spring of 2016.



The State of SC and the Department of Mental Health has approved three more VA nursing homes to be built in the state. That would bring the total number in the state to six. The locations for the new VA nursing homes are: Columbia, Florence, and Gaffney. Currently there are VA nursing homes in Anderson, Columbia, and Walterboro.

NEW SOUTH CAROLINA POW MEDAL



South Carolina Veterans who were prisoners of war during a war time period are eligible to receive a new special state POW medal for their time in captivity. The POW medal was created by the Legislature in a June 2014 law that authorizes the Governor to present the award to South Carolina residents who are on federal POW lists. Any former POW who received an honorable discharge and is a South Carolina citizen can apply for the medal. Former prisoners from WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, or other conflicts are also eligible. Surviving spouses or descendants can also apply for the medal once.

If you live in Lexington County or know someone who does and they meet the above requirements, please call the Lexington County VA office at 803-785-8400 with their name and contact information.

Mark your calendar...

The SC Veteran's Rally will be held April 28, 2016 on the State House grounds.



The VA has a new website anyone can access for all VA questions, SEP user guides, regulations, policies, laws and any other VA resources. The website is: www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov.

Website



Pelion High School

R. Clark Cooper, *Principal*
Eric Dowdy, *Assistant Principal*
Erica Page, *Assistant Principal*
Tracy Gooding, *Assistant Administrator*
Dann Holland, *Athletic Director*

Dear Friends,

The Pelion High School Band has been invited to represent Lexington County and the State of South Carolina next spring in a special performance for the 75th Anniversary of the Historic Attack on Pearl Harbor. The Pelion Band students, on the banks of the USS Arizona Memorial, will make history as they perform a concert of American Patriotic Music and participate in a wreath and flag ceremony on behalf of the veterans of Lexington County and South Carolina. In order to participate in this historic event, the students and parents of Pelion High School are taking on a large fundraising campaign and need the support of our community to help make this special performance a reality.

The Pelion Bands have experienced unprecedented success and growth over the last decade. This invitation marks a culmination of many years of hard work by our students, parents, and community members. The Pelion Bands have represented Lexington County and South Carolina at many regional events over the last decade including: **The North/South Shrine Bowl Game as the South Carolina Representative, The Midlands Dancing With The Stars Gala, The Fallen Soldiers Ceremony, The Lexington County Veterans Day Parade, Dedication of the Pelion Veterans Memorial, South Carolina Representative for the Orlando, Florida Universal Parade, and The Santa Claus Band for the Carolina Carillon Parade in Columbia, SC.**

The Pelion Bands have been regionally and nationally recognized for excellence including: **The 2015 SCBDA Lower State Band Champions, Recipients of the SCBDA "Outstanding Performance Award" the highest award given to band programs in South Carolina, Regional Championships in Orlando, Atlanta, and Charlotte in addition to numerous local parades and concerts.** The Pelion Bands strive to provide each of its students an invaluable educational experience while in high school and to prepare these fine students to be successful citizens and leaders in our community. We pride ourselves in representing the communities of Pelion, Lexington County, and South Carolina with distinction.

The Pelion Bands host and perform at hundreds of events each year and are the most visible group of students at Pelion High School. We are in great need of community members to help sponsor this historic event and our students. It will be an honor to represent so many great citizens and veterans on such a grand stage and we are truly blessed to have this opportunity.

For more information about how you can help make this honorable performance a reality for our students and community, please contact Otto J Hage, Director of Bands at 803-821-2288 or via email at ohage@lexington1.net.

Musically Yours,

Otto Hage
Director of Bands
Pelion High School
803-821-2288

600 LYDIA DRIVE – PELION, SOUTH CAROLINA 29123
TELEPHONE: (803) 821-2200 – FACSIMILE (803) 821-2203

Wreaths Across America at Fort Jackson National Cemetery would like to invite Girl and Boy Scouts to participate and be a part of the ceremony at the Fort Jackson National Cemetery on Saturday, December 12, 2015. There will be age appropriate duties that the scouts can perform. The duties include helping in placing the wreaths, serve as escorts for the elderly and handicapped, stand watch row and pass out wreaths for placement to name a few.



This year the individuals in charge of the Scouts and contacts for the event are:

Girl Scouts (all ages): Dana Wangsness - email - danawangness1998@yahoo.com
Boy Scouts (all ages): Matthew Ewers - email - fortjacksontroop89@yahoo.com

Please contact them directly to RSVP your troop's desire to participate this year.



Lawyers 4 Vets

Lawyers 4 Vets connects lower income Veterans living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines with local attorneys who provide one-on-one pro bono legal advice or representation. Lawyers 4 Vets will assist Veterans by appointment only with:

1. Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina ID, birth certificates, etc).
2. Child support and visitation issues in South Carolina.
3. Expungements and pardons in South Carolina.
4. Consumer protection.
5. Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney.



Veterans seeking information about the clinic should call 1-877-289-6000.

VA Funding to Help the Homeless

Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced 12.8 million dollars in renewal funding through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program to 20 community agencies that currently provide transitional housing with supportive services for homeless Veterans under the Transition in Place (TIP) model.

As a key component of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) plan to eliminate homelessness among Veterans, VA's GPD program provides per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate supportive housing for specific homeless Veteran populations, which includes the innovative TIP approach to assist homeless Veterans transition from homelessness. TIP encourages rapid movement from transitional housing to permanent housing which enables Veterans to live as independently, as possible, while increasing housing stabilization. More information about VA's homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Community organizations seeking details and/or more information, may contact the National Grant and Per Diem Program office at <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp> or by calling 1-877-332-0334.



FYI...

The 2016 VA disability and pension rates will not include a cost of living increase.

It is also unlikely that there will be a cost of living increase from Social Security. Unfortunately, there will be an increase in the Medicare Part B premiums to \$159.30 per month.



Financial Distress

Having difficulty paying your copay bills?



VA has programs that may help you with your copay requirements!

- **Hardship** - If your income has recently changed, you may qualify for VA medical care without copays.

- **Repayment Plan** - You can establish a plan to spread your current health care debt over a specified period of time.

- **Compromise** - You can request a one-time monetary settlement eliminating your current health care debt.

- **Waiver** - You can request your current medical copay debts be waived for charges less than 6 months old (180 days). If a waiver is approved, you may also qualify to have Beneficiary Travel mileage reimbursement deductibles eliminated.

For additional information and to see if you qualify for these specific VA programs, contact

1-877-222 VETS (8387)

Changes to SC Laws

Recently there have been two major changes to SC laws affecting Veterans or surviving spouses.

1. **Senate Bill 153** - States that certain surviving spouses are also extended property tax exemption on one vehicle if she is eligible for DIC benefits and the Veteran was 100% P&T at the time of death. This bill took effect on June 1, 2015.

2. **Senate Bill 391** - States that active duty personnel and certain Veterans can receive in state tuition if residing in South Carolina and they do not have to meet the one year residency requirement. This bill took effect on July 1, 2015.

For more information go to scstatehouse.gov/legislation.php then search by bill number.



Many area schools are holding Veterans Day Programs.



Contact your local school for more information.

South Carolinians across the state faced record rainfall, leading to widespread destruction and flooding. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who lost their lives in this tragedy and all the families affected by the devastating flood.

The State of South Carolina received a major federal disaster declaration for multiple counties. This declaration means that families can receive individual assistance for:

- 1. Temporary Housing Assistance.**
- 2. Repair Assistance.**
- 3. Replacement Assistance.**
- 4. Permanent or Semi-Permanent Construction.**

Register your damage as soon as possible with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by visiting www.disasterassistance.gov or calling 1-800-621-3362.

There is also local information on the Lexington County Website at www.lex-co.sc.gov/Pages/GeneralAssistance.aspx.



VA Announces New Rules Regarding Service Animals in VA Facilities

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) announced that it has revised its regulation regarding the presence of animals on VA property. The updated regulation will ensure VA practices remain consistent with applicable federal law. It will also assist individuals entering VA facilities in developing a clear and consistent understanding of the criteria governing facility access for service animals.

"As I have traveled to VA facilities throughout the country, I have heard from many Veterans about what a vital role their service animals play in their lives," said Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "The revised regulation will ensure Veterans and employees have clear guidance regarding the presence of service animals in our facilities. VA remains committed to ensuring America's Veterans have access to the health care benefits for which they are eligible."

Under the revised regulation, only dogs that are individually trained to perform work or tasks on behalf of an individual with a disability will be considered service animals. Other animals will not be permitted in VA facilities, unless expressly allowed as an exception under the regulation for activities such as animal-assisted therapy or for other reasons such as law enforcement purposes. The regulation further confirms that service animals may access VA property subject to the same terms that govern the admission of the public to VA property, and may be restricted from certain areas on VA properties to ensure that patient care, patient safety, and infection control standards are not compromised.



Coming in the Next Issue...
Agent Orange Presumptives & Benefits; Aid & Attendance; and Medical Expense Reports.

Featured Medal:

United Nations Medal

The United Nations Medal is an international decoration awarded by the United Nations (U.N.) to the various world countries' militaries for participation in joint international military and police operations such as peacekeeping, humanitarian efforts, and disaster relief. The medal is ranked in militaries and police forces as a service medal. The United Nations awarded its first medal during the Korean War (1950-53). Since 1955, many additional United Nations medals have been created and awarded for participation in various United Nations missions and actions around the world.

The most common United Nations medal is the standard U.N. decoration known simply as the *United Nations Medal*. Most countries bestow this award for any action in which a member of the military participated in a joint U.N. activity.

In situations where a service member participated in multiple U.N. operations, service stars, campaign clasps, or award numbers are authorized as attachments to the United Nations Medal. These devices vary depending on the regulations of the various armed forces.

The U.N. has authorized the award of numerals to be attached to the medal ribbon. The qualification for these numerals is not to indicate the number of campaigns served in, but rather the number of qualifying periods of service, which are counted as 180 consecutive days after the initial qualifying period of ninety days.



Picture of the United Nations Medal and Ribbon.

About Our Office

This office is employed by Lexington County not the Federal VA. The Lexington County Veterans' Affairs Office is an advocate for Veterans and their surviving dependents. We provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Hospitals. The Lexington County VA Office assists former and present members of the US Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: Service-Connected disability and Non-Service Connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits. We are not trained in Social Security or Department of Defense Benefits.

November is National Peanut Butter Month!



December is National Tie Month!

Happy new year