



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

March/April 2016



Lexington, SC.

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At A Glance Calendar March/April

<p>Weekly on Tuesdays in March</p> <p>Thursday, March 3rd</p> <p>Friday, March 4th</p> <p>Tuesday, March 8th</p> <p>Wednesday, March 9th</p> <p>Friday, March 11th</p> <p>Saturday, March 12th</p> <p>Sunday, March 13th</p> <p>Thursday, March 17th</p> <p>Sunday, March 20th</p> <p>Tuesday, March 22nd</p> <p>Friday, March 25th</p> <p>Sunday, March 27th</p> <p>Weekly on Tuesdays in April</p> <p>Friday, April 1st</p> <p>Thursday, April 7th</p> <p>Friday, April 8th</p> <p>Saturday, April 9th</p> <p>Tuesday, April 12th</p> <p>Tuesday, April 26th</p> <p>Wednesday, April 27th</p> <p>Thursday, April 28th</p>	<p>Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon</p> <p>Speaking Engagement @ Gaston Library</p> <p>Chapin Outreach</p> <p>Veteran's Fair @ Brookland Baptist Church</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>Speaking Engagement @ Genrex</p> <p>Batesburg/Leesville Outreach</p> <p>Dang-it Dolls Workshop in Cayce</p> <p>Daylight Savings Time Begins</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>Spring Begins</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>Good Friday</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p> <p>Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon</p> <p>April Fool's Day</p> <p>Gaston Outreach</p> <p>Batesburg/Leesville Outreach</p> <p>Dang-it Dolls Workshop in Cayce</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>Administrative Professional's Day</p> <p>SC Veteran's Rally at State House</p>
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<p>Purple—Holidays/Special Days</p> <p>Blue—Outreach dates</p> <p>Red—County Offices Closed, No van scheduled and Special Notices</p> <p>Black—Director's appearances in the County</p>	<p>Brown—County Council Meetings</p> <p>Pink—Special Events throughout the County</p> <p>Orange—Director Out of Office</p> <p>Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings</p>
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From the Director...

As March and April begin we also see balmy weather and pollen and other springtime activities. Local baseball and soccer leagues begin their seasons and spring break will be here before we know it. It is an exciting time of year and it sets us up for the hotter weather of summer.

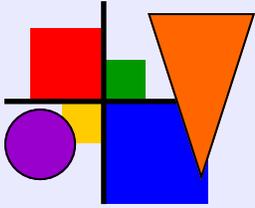
The VA has made better changes to the VA Choice program, the program that allows a Veteran that can't get an appointment within 30 days of their request to use a civilian health provider. But the provider has to be on a VA list and not a provider the Veteran randomly selects. There is anticipation this may change in the future to a provider the Veteran selects and other changes may come in 2016 to further improve this program.

Other changes for 2016 should include updating the Camp Lejeune contaminated water conditions, which includes more disabilities being added to the list and a law change that makes the conditions presumptive to military service on this base. We await these changes with hope because they will certainly make a difference in the lives of our Veterans and their survivors.

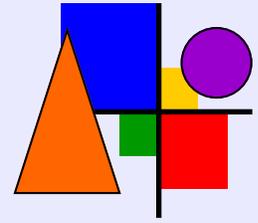
Speaking of presumptive, Veterans exposed to Agent Orange have 15 known conditions on that presumptive list and a lot of them don't know it. Recently, I spent time with a Vietnam Veteran who was 10% disabled and I asked him was he satisfied with that, he said no. We went over the Agent Orange list and he had some of the conditions as well as secondary conditions. He obtained the medical evidence and we filed the claim and today he is 80% disabled and very grateful. It may not work this way for all who were exposed but we want to help them explore this.

Many Veterans lack education on VA benefits and programs and this is why our office is here. We will do everything we can to help a Veteran or a survivor obtain the benefit they are entitled to. Please inform those you know to give us a call and let's see what we can do.

It is an honor to serve Lexington County!



Presumptive Disabilities



The VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain Veterans were caused by their military service. The VA does this because of the unique circumstances of their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a Veteran in one of these groups, the VA presumes that the circumstances of his or her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded.

The following diseases and conditions are considered to be part of this program:

Certain chronic and tropical diseases (for example, multiple sclerosis, diabetes mellitus, and arthritis) may be service connected if the disease becomes at least 10% disabling within the applicable time limit following service.

All Veterans who develop Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, at any time after separation from service may be eligible for compensation for that disability. To be eligible, the Veteran must have served a minimum of 90 consecutive days of active service.

Prisoners of War: For former POWs who were imprisoned for any length of time, the following disabilities are presumed to be service connected if they become at least 10 percent disabling anytime after military service: psychosis, any of the anxiety states, dysthymic disorder, organic residuals of frostbite, post-traumatic osteoarthritis, atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease and their complications, stroke and its complications, and, effective October 10, 2008, osteoporosis if the Veteran has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

For former POWs who were imprisoned for at least 30 days: The following conditions are also presumed to be service connected: avitaminosis, beriberi, chronic dysentery, helminthiasis, malnutrition (including optic atrophy associated with malnutrition), pellagra and/or other nutritional deficiencies, irritable bowel syndrome, peptic ulcer disease, peripheral neuropathy except where related to infectious causes, cirrhosis of the liver, and, effective September 28, 2009, osteoporosis.

Veterans Exposed to Radiation: For Veterans who participated in radiation risk activities as defined in VA regulations while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, the following conditions are presumed to be service connected: all forms of leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia); cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (renal pelvis, ureter, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, and ovary; bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma; multiple myeloma; lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease), and primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated).

To determine service connection for other conditions or exposures not eligible for presumptive service connection, the VA considers factors such as the amount of radiation exposure, duration of exposure, elapsed time between exposure and onset of the disease, gender and family history, age at time of exposure, the extent to which a non-service exposure could contribute to disease, and the relative sensitivity of exposed tissue.

Continued on page 4

Presumptive Disabilities continued from page 3

Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange and Other Herbicides: A Veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, is presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in support of military operations.

VA presumes the following diseases to be service-connected for such exposed Veterans:

- AL amyloidosis,
- Chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne,
- Chronic B-cell leukemias (including, but not limited to, hairy-cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
- Diabetes mellitus (Type 2),
- Hodgkin's disease,
- Ischemic heart disease.
- Multiple myeloma,
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma,
- Parkinson's disease,
- Peripheral Neuropathy (acute & subacute; manifested to a degree of 10% or more within a year after last date on which Veteran was exposed to herbicide)
- Porphyria cutanea tarda,
- Prostate cancer,
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea),
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma).

Gulf War Veterans with Chronic Disabilities: May receive disability compensation for chronic disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses and/or medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms. A disability is considered chronic if it has existed for at least six months. The undiagnosed illness must have appeared either during active service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War period of August 2, 1990, to July 31, 1991, or to a degree of at least 10 percent at any time since then through December 31, 2016. This theater of operations includes Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

Examples of symptoms of an undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness defined by a cluster of signs and symptoms include: chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, functional gastrointestinal disorders, fatigue, signs or symptoms involving the skin, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological signs or symptoms, neuropsychological signs or symptoms, signs or symptoms involving the respiratory system (upper or lower), sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal signs or symptoms, cardiovascular signs or symptoms, abnormal weight loss, and menstrual disorders.

Presumptive service connection may be granted for the following infectious diseases if found compensable within a specific time period: Brucellosis, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella burnetti* (Q fever), Malaria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Nontyphoid *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, Visceral leishmaniasis, and West Nile virus. Qualifying periods of service for these infectious diseases include active military, naval, or air service in the above stated Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War period of August 2, 1990, until such time as the Gulf War is ended by Congressional action or Presidential proclamation; and active military, naval, or air service on or after September 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION CHANGES



The van runs on certain Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm.

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 have added a new volunteer driver and currently have four drivers.
We are still looking 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
March and April:**



**Thursday, March 3rd
Tuesday, March 8th
Wednesday, March 9th
Monday, March 14th
Tuesday, March 15th
Wednesday, March 23rd
Monday, March 28th**

**Tuesday, April 5th
Thursday, April 7th
Tuesday, April 12th
Wednesday, April 13th
Tuesday, April 19th
Tuesday, April 26th
Wednesday, April 27th**

Please call the office for space availability on these dates.

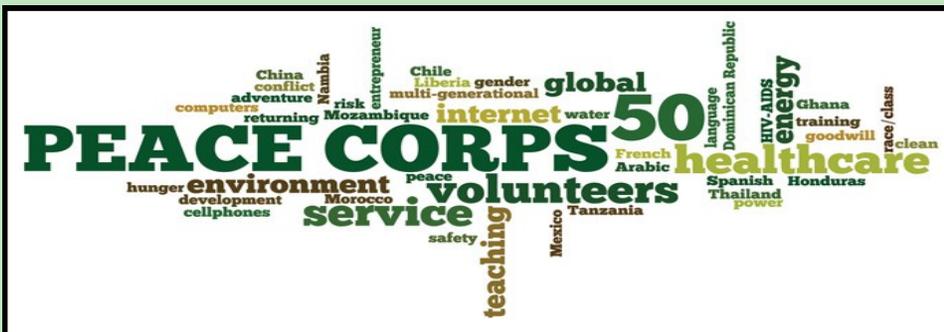
The History of the Peace Corps



The Peace Corps is a volunteer program run by the United States government. The stated mission of the Peace Corps includes providing technical assistance, helping people outside the United States to understand American culture, and helping Americans to understand the cultures of other countries. The work is generally related to social and economic development. Each program participant, a Peace Corps Volunteer, is an American citizen, typically with a college degree, who works abroad for a period of two years after three months of training. Volunteers work with governments, schools, non-profit organizations, non-government organizations, and entrepreneurs in education, business, information technology, agriculture, and the environment. After 24 months of service, volunteers can request an extension of service.

During the course of his campaign for the presidency in 1960, Kennedy floated the idea that a new “army” should be created by the United States. This force would be made up of civilians who would volunteer their time and skills to travel to underdeveloped nations to assist them in any way they could. To fulfill this plan, Kennedy issued an executive order on March 1, 1961 establishing the Peace Corps as a trial program. Kennedy sent a message to Congress asking for its support and made clear the significance of underdeveloped nations to the United States. The people of these nations were “struggling for economic and social progress.” “Our own freedom,” Kennedy continued, “and the future of freedom around the world, depend, in a very real sense, on their ability to build growing and independent nations where men can live in dignity, liberated from the bonds of hunger, ignorance, and poverty.” Many in Congress, and the U.S. public, were skeptical about the program’s costs and the effectiveness of American aid to what were perceived to be “backward” nations, but Kennedy’s warning about the dangers in the underdeveloped world could not be ignored. Revolutions were breaking out around the globe and many of these conflicts—such as in Laos, the Congo, and elsewhere—were in danger of becoming Cold War battlefields. Several months later, on September 21, 1961, Congress voted to make the Corps permanent.

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Americans—especially young people—flocked to serve in dozens of nations, particularly in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Working side by side with the people of these nations, Peace Corps volunteers helped build sewer and water systems; constructed and taught in schools; assisted in developing new crops and agricultural methods to increase productivity; and participated in numerous other projects. Volunteers often faced privation and sometimes danger, and they were not always welcomed by foreign people suspicious of American motives. Overall, however, the program was judged a success in terms of helping to “win the hearts and minds” of people in the underdeveloped world. The program continues to function, and thousands of Americans each year are drawn to the humanitarian mission and sense of adventure that characterizes the Peace Corps.



From 1961 to 2015, nearly 220,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps and served in 140 countries.

VA Patient Advocates

Available at every medical center, Patient Advocates are highly trained professionals who can help resolve your concerns about any aspect of your health care experience, particularly those concerns that cannot be resolved at the point of care.

Patient Advocates listen to any questions, problems, or special needs you have and refer your concerns to the appropriate Medical Center staff for resolution.



The Patient Advocate program seeks to personally give you and your family the security of knowing someone is available to focus on your individual concerns and rights as a patient. If you or a Veteran

you care for has not been able to resolve important issues related to VA health care through other means of communications, please contact one of the highly-skilled Patient Advocates. Your feedback about the care and services you receive while in the Medical Center provides the VA an opportunity to make changes and improvements; feedback gives you the opportunity to make a suggestion, and correct problems or give a compliment.

During your stay, you may be surveyed by one of the Patient Advocates. This is a short patient satisfaction survey asking for feedback about your perception of the care you are receiving. You may answer your quick card anonymously, or you may provide your name and contact information if you would like the VA to contact you about the resolution of any issues. After your visit, you may receive a confidential questionnaire in the mail asking you about your most recent outpatient or inpatient treatment at our medical center. Please use the survey to let the VA know of any concerns, complaints, or questions you have about your care, so that the VA can resolve them. We also appreciate compliments about what we are doing right. Employees must respect and support your rights as a patient.

If you would like more information about your rights as a patient, please talk with your VA treatment team members or if necessary, a Patient Advocate. Patient Rights and Responsibilities are posted in outpatient and inpatient areas. If you have not received a copy of your Rights and Responsibilities, please contact a Patient Advocate who can provide you with a copy.



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.

Dang-it Dolls Workshops

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, March 12th
and

Saturday, April 9th
from 10am to 3pm

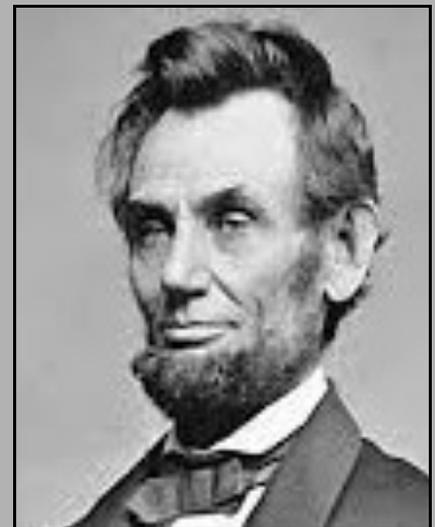
at the Cayce Masonic Lodge,
1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.



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

THE MORE THE MERRIER
really counts.

"We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."
- Abraham Lincoln



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.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of March/April?



March 1, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps.



March 3, 1847 - Telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland.



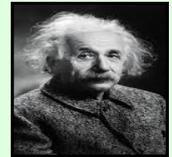
March 6, 1836 - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna.

March 10, 1862 - The first issue of U.S. government paper money occurred as \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills began circulation.



March 12, 1609 - The island of Bermuda was colonized by the British.

March 14, 1879 - Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany.



March 19, 2003 - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power.



March 24, 1874 - Harry Houdini was born (as Erik Weisz) in Budapest, Hungary.



March 31, 1968 - President Lyndon Johnson made a surprise announcement that he would not seek re-election as a result of the Vietnam conflict.



April 2, 1513 - Spanish explorer Ponce De Leon sighted Florida and claimed it for the Spanish Crown.



April 3, 1865 - The Confederate capital of Richmond surrendered to Union forces.



April 6, 1917 - The U.S. entered World War I in Europe.



April 9, 1865 - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended.

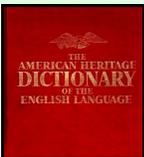
April 10, 1847 - Publisher Joseph Pulitzer was born in Budapest, Hungary.



April 14, 1828 - The first dictionary of American-style English was published by Noah Webster.



April 16, 1889 - Film comedian Charlie Chaplin was born in London.



April 19, 1995 - At 9:02 a.m., a massive car-bomb explosion destroyed the entire side of a nine story federal building in Oklahoma City.



April 22, 1864 - "In God We Trust" was included on all newly minted U.S. coins by an Act of Congress.

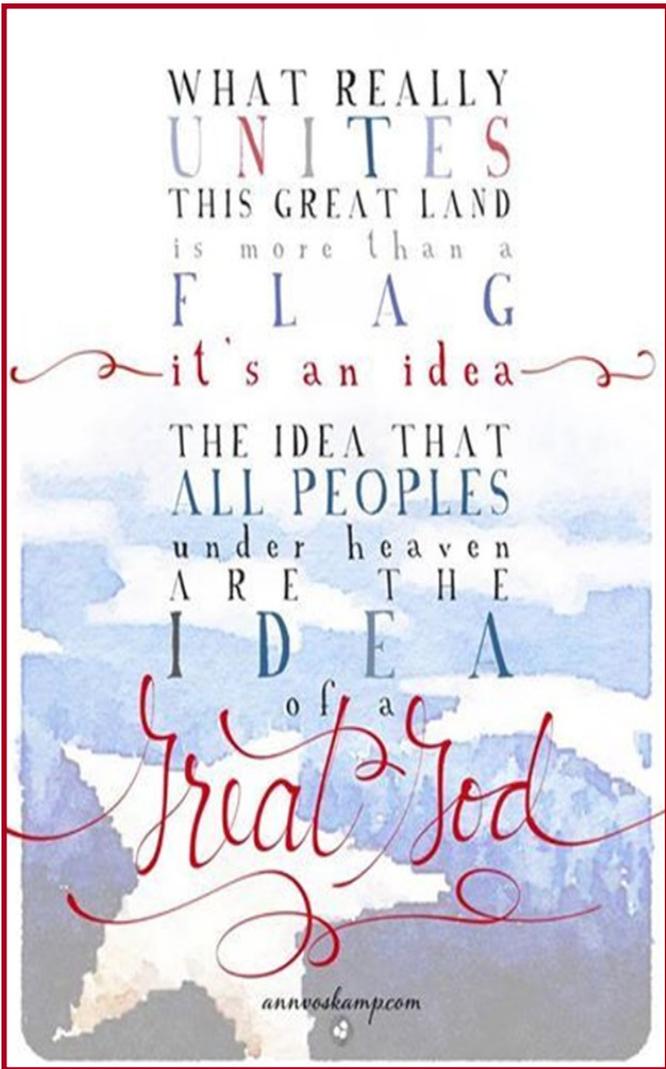


April 26, 1785 - American artist and naturalist John J. Audubon was born in Haiti.



April 30, 1789 - George Washington became the first U.S. President.





VA PARTNERS WITH YMCA OF THE USA TO SUPPORT VETERANS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) have refreshed and expanded their partnership to promote and enhance the health and well-being of Veterans and their families.

A new agreement will make it easier for Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities to work with local YMCAs to ensure that Veterans are connected to needed resources and opportunities in their communities.

“Since the Civil War, the Y has been a friend to service members and Veterans—the YMCA’s education scholarships were forerunners of the GI Bill,” said Secretary Bob McDonald. “I’m pleased to announce that VA and Y-USA have agreed to continue that legacy by further expanding our partnership.”

In communities where VA and the Y choose to work together, the partnership connects Veterans to VA services and benefits in the areas of employment, homelessness, healthy lifestyle programming, and reintegration into the local community.

“This enhanced agreement makes it easier for local VA facilities and YMCAs to collaborate on helping transitioning service members and Veterans connect to the resources and opportunities that they need,” said McDonald.

“Our nation’s Veterans, and their families, have dedicated so much in service to our country. The Y is honored to have the opportunity to show our appreciation by doing what we do best – improving the lives of individuals in the communities we serve,” said Kevin Washington, President and CEO of Y-USA. “There are many YMCAs across the nation that are already working with VA and providing services directly to Veterans, this formal acknowledgement between the Y and VA will make it easier for that work to continue, expand and flourish.”

VA is committed to working closely with nongovernmental organizations, such as Y-USA to identify new and innovative ways to support VA’s commitment to care for those who “have borne the battle” and their families. Strengthening collaborations within communities and with community-based organizations helps to achieve VA’s goal of improving the lives of Veterans, service members, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

While the collaboration might look different in each participating community, the mutual goals of improving the lives of Veterans and their families will remain consistent nationwide.

March is Red Cross Awareness month!



April is Stress Awareness month!





We all get heavier as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads. So I'm not fat, I'm just really intelligent and my head couldn't hold any more so it started filling up the rest of me!

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!



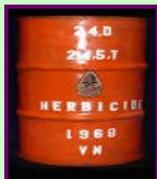
American Red Cross

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

C-123 Aircraft Agent Orange Exposure Claims



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.

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)

*HAPPY EASTER * HAPPY EASTER * HAPPY EASTER*



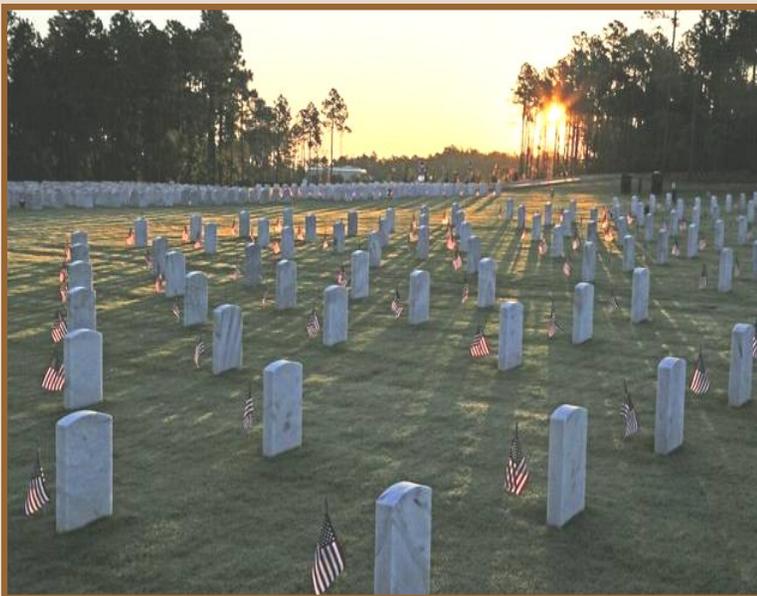
Fort Jackson National Cemetery

The 585-acre national cemetery in Richland County, South Carolina, will serve Veterans' needs well into the next century. The cemetery is located about a quarter of a mile off Interstate 20 on property formerly held by Fort Jackson.



With the passage of the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Congress directed the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to establish six new national cemeteries. A demographic study of the nationwide Veteran population identified the Columbia-Greenville area as lacking burial options. Four sites were considered and in 2008 the U.S. Department of Defense transferred land used for field training exercises to National Cemetery Administration for the purpose of developing Fort Jackson National Cemetery. The cemetery was formally dedicated the same year and opened for burials in 2009. Fort Jackson National Cemetery is the third national cemetery established in South Carolina and the 126th in the national cemetery system.

In July 2007, the VA awarded the cemetery design contract to Davis Floyd, Inc. In May 2008, the VA began to develop a 15-acre early burial area with temporary facilities (Phase 1A) to be followed by the second construction stage of the project (Phase 1B). When the first phase of construction was complete, the 50-acre interment area provides 5,704 full-casket gravesites, including 4,224 pre-placed crypts, 1,085 in-ground cremation sites and 2,000 columbarium niches. Also included with the project is an administration and public information center, public restrooms, a maintenance facility, a cemetery entrance area, committal shelters for funeral services, a flag assembly area, and supporting infrastructure including roads, utilities, landscaping and irrigation.



Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces who have met a minimum active duty service requirement and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. A Veteran's spouse, widow or widower, minor dependent children, and under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities may also be eligible for burial. Eligible spouses and children may be buried even if they predecease the Veteran. Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty or who die while on training duty, or were eligible for retired pay, may also be eligible for burial.



Same-Sex Spousal Benefits

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court held in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that the 14th Amendment of the

U.S. Constitution requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state. Accordingly, the VA now recognizes all same-sex marriages without regard to a Veteran's state of residence. Formal guidance implementing *Obergefell* was issued to claims processors on October 22, 2015.

Eligibility Requirements

The VA offers a variety of benefits and services that depend on "spouse" and "surviving spouse" status. The VA will generally accept a claimant's statement that he or she is married. This same procedure applies no matter if the claimant is asserting that he/she is in an opposite-sex marriage or a same-sex marriage.

The VA is dedicated to serving all eligible service members, Veterans and their families and providing them the benefits they have earned. We encourage all Veterans in same-sex marriages who believe they are entitled to benefits (including those whose claims were previously denied on a ground related to their marriage) to promptly apply for benefits. For additional information, updated guidance, and instructions on how to re-apply, please visit <http://www.va.gov/opa/marriage/>.



The First Red-Bird

by Evaleen Stein

*I heard a song at daybreak,
So honey-sweet and clear,
The essence of all joyous things
Seemed mingling in its cheer.*

*The frosty world about me
I searched with eager gaze,
But all was slumber-bound and wrapped
In violet-tinted haze.*

*Then suddenly a sunbeam
Shot slanting o'er the hill,
And once again from out the sky
I heard that honied trill.*

*And there upon a poplar,
Poised at its topmost height,
I saw a little singer clad
In scarlet plumage bright.*

*The poplar branches quivered,
By dawn winds lightly blown,
And like a breeze-swept poppy-flower
The red-bird rocked and shone.*

*The blue sky, and his feathers
Flashed o'er by golden light,
Oh, all my heart with rapture thrilled,
It was so sweet a sight!*

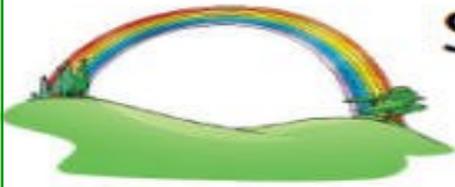


Attention Commanders of Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County, our office is looking for a contact name and number for all American Legion post, DAV chapters, VFW's, etc. Please contact our office with this information.

Did you know?

10 to 12% of Veterans appeal their decisions Nationally and 20% of Veterans appeal their decisions Statewide.





St Patrick's Day Word Search



o	e	s	c	i	s	d	r	e	l	r	b
l	a	i	p	n	y	t	a	x	e	s	t
s	h	u	k	i	z	p	i	g	p	d	i
p	a	t	r	i	c	k	n	r	r	w	m
e	s	i	j	n	q	w	b	e	e	z	h
i	m	h	n	x	c	q	o	e	c	c	b
r	j	e	a	t	i	j	w	n	h	v	n
e	a	k	r	m	t	p	a	r	a	d	e
l	f	g	m	a	r	p	o	t	u	k	s
a	a	m	c	e	l	o	v	d	n	r	f
n	z	g	o	l	d	d	c	l	b	w	g
d	l	u	c	k	y	b	u	k	w	n	u

emerald

gold

green

ireland

leprechaun

lucky

parade

patrick

pot

rainbow

saint

shamrock



Happy St. Patrick's Day!



**March is
National
Peanut Month.**



**April is
National
Pecan Month.**



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

VA Celebrates 70 Years of Partnering with Medical Schools



Caring for the nation's Veterans is a shared honor and a shared responsibility, which is why the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) this year is celebrating the 70th anniversary of its partnership with the nation's medical and health professional schools.

Since 1946, the VA has worked with academic institutions to provide high quality, state-of-the-art health care to America's Veterans and to train new health professionals to meet the rapidly evolving health care needs within the VA and the nation.

The partnership between the VA and academic affiliates dates back to the end of World War II. Following the allied victory, the VA faced the imminent arrival of over 100,000 new patients and was confronted with a severe lack of resources as it had only 98 mostly rural hospitals offering fewer than 84,000 beds and 1,000 physicians. To meet this challenge, the VA created a landmark partnership with U.S. medical schools to establish a dynamic, talented workforce of students, physician residents, and faculty who provide world class care to Veterans while providing training to generations of future physicians that has evolved to include more than forty health care professions over the decades.

"Through this historic collaboration, the VA has become the largest single provider of medical training in the country, where more than 40,000 residents and 20,000 medical students receive clinical training each year," said Darrell G. Kirch, President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

"The VA benefits enormously from its relationship with its partners in the medical academic community. We are able to do the work we do because of this synergistic relationship," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "We have the benefit of the top medical professionals being produced by leading academic institutions. In turn, the medical community and patients around the country benefit from the VA innovations; innovations such as the implantable cardiac pacemaker; the nicotine patch to help smokers quit; liver transplants and electronic medical records. We are both proud and grateful for these relationships."

Today, the VA conducts the largest education and training programs for health professionals in the United States. The VA has affiliations with more than 1,800 educational institutions; more than 70 percent of all doctors in the U.S. have received training in the VA healthcare system. The VA invests \$900 million annually to provide clinical education and training programs to more than 120,000 interns, residents, fellows and students in more than 40 clinical health professions. Among them are over 10,000 graduate medical education (GME) positions training more than 40,000 physicians in training annually.

WWI Memorial Design Selected



The World War I Centennial Commission announced the winning design for a new national memorial. "The Weight of Sacrifice," created by 25 year-old Joe Weishaar, a 2013 University of Arkansas graduate who now works in Chicago, and New York-based sculptor Sabin Howard. The design was selected out of five finalists from 350 total entries.

The design met the challenge of creating a concept to appropriately honor the service and sacrifice of the nearly 5 million Americans who served, and the more than 116,000 who died. The new national memorial is hoped to be dedicated on Veterans Day 2018, the centennial of the end of "The Great War." It will be built a block away from the White House in Pershing Park, and include the existing statue of Army Gen. John J. "Blackjack" Pershing, commander of American Expeditionary Forces.

VA's Polytrauma System of Care Marks One Million TBI Screenings



The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Polytrauma System of Care (PSC) has hit the one million mark in screening Veterans for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), often regarded as one of the signature injuries of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBI symptoms such as severe headaches, memory loss, reduced executive functioning, and tinnitus can range from manageable to seriously disabling, potentially limiting a Veteran's ability to work and manage daily living. Screening Veterans for TBI and helping them to deal with the condition is one of the central programs of PSC.

Started in May 2005, PSC provides comprehensive and coordinated rehabilitative care to Veterans with life-changing injuries, including TBI, limb loss, blindness, hearing loss and tinnitus, among others. PSC also assists with community re-entry needs. It is fully coordinated with the Department of Defense to ensure uninterrupted, seamless health care transition for those that served on active duty.

Over these past 10 years, many service members have returned home with injuries that would not have been survivable in previous conflicts. Today, they not only survive, they thrive, in large part due to PSC, a thoroughly Veteran-centric VA program.

The VA has 110 Polytrauma rehabilitation sites across the country, including 5 Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation); 23 Polytrauma Network Sites (comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation); and 87 Polytrauma Support Clinic Teams (comprehensive outpatient rehabilitations). Services available through PCS include interdisciplinary evaluation and treatment, development of a comprehensive plan of care, case management, patient and family education and training, psychosocial support, and use of advanced rehabilitation treatments and prosthetic technologies.

1,000,000

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.



KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATION MEDAL

These medals were given out to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Korean war. The medal was commissioned and made by the South Korean government as a



sign of appreciation and thanks for American soldiers. The lanyard of the medal depicts the flags of all the nations involved in the war and the medal itself contains a piece of the wire from the DMZ.

Do you know of a Korean War Veteran in Lexington County that hasn't received a Korean War Commemoration medal? If so, please have them contact or come by our office. If the Veteran is deceased, this medal can also be awarded to the surviving spouse.

Our office has 22 medals remaining to award, so it is first come first served.

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.

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

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.





News from VAMC Dorn

Did you know that there are 2,438 people employed by the VA hospital?

Construction is to begin in April for the new three story parking structure being built on the Dorn campus.



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.

The Dorn VAMC has been named as a new location for a Fisher House. More information to follow.



It was announced that the red, white and blue teams at Dorn are to get their own stand alone clinic. Also, there are plans for a new police headquarters and mental health clinic.

Job Hunting?

The VA medical center and regional office is hiring Veterans.

Visit USAjobs.com for more 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

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 SC.
4. Consumer protection.
5. Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney.



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

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 \$121.80 per month.

COST OF LIVING

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

26th ANNUAL LEXINGTON SERTOMA CLUB
GOLF TOURNAMENT
MONDAY, April 25, 2016—GOLDEN HILLS CC
LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
12:30 SHOT-GUN (lunch served at 11:30 am)
HUDSON'S BARBEQUE DINNER AFTER PLAY

\$400 PER TEAM
 THE ABOVE FEE INCLUDES
EVERYTHING

\$10,000
HOLE-IN-ONE
CONTEST

MULLIGANS, PHANTOM SHOT,
 plus cash prizes for

CLOSEST TO THE HOLE ON
 PAR 3'S, and for the
 LONGEST DRIVE ON ONE
 PAR 5 HOLE

Meals – Drinks – Prizes &
 More



HOLE SPONSORSHIP
 Your company name displayed
 on sign at tee box or green,
 plus additional recognition.
 Choice of sponsorship level

\$100

\$150

\$300

\$500

\$1000

SEE REVERSE
FOR MORE DETAILS

CAPTAIN'S CHOICE FORMAT

BEVERAGES & SNACKS PROVIDED

**THE TOP 3 TEAMS WILL BE AWARDED: First Place \$400,
 Second Place \$300 and Third Place \$200**

11:30 HOT DOG LUNCH PRIOR TO TOURNAMENT

Silent Auction with Lots of Great Items

**DINNER CATERED BY HUDSON'S—GREAT BARBEQUE
 DOOR PRIZES GALORE!**

Team Name _____ Captain _____ Phone _____

Player _____ Handicap _____

Player _____ Handicap _____

Player _____ Handicap _____

Player _____ Handicap _____

Mail checks payable to:

Lexington Sertoma Club
P O Box 491
Lexington, SC 29071
 or call (803) 401-6468

.....
 The Lexington Sertoma Club is a local civic organization chartered in 1977. Our primary focus is communication — helping people with speech and hearing disabilities. We also strive to "give back" to our community by contributing to other local projects and activities. If you are interested in becoming a member of our club, contact Membership Chair Matt Quinton at (803) 260-7178.

2016 Lexington Sertoma Club Golf Tournament Sponsorship Opportunities



Bronze Sponsor - \$100.00 Donation

- Sponsor sign at tee box to advertise your business – sign has up to 3 lines of information, such as business name, phone number, website, etc.
- Your business name listed on sponsor sheet distributed to all golfing participants
- Exposure to over 100 golfers and business people from the community
- Knowledge that you have helped people locally with hearing or speech disorders.

Silver Sponsor - \$150.00 Donation

- Sponsor sign at tee box to advertise your business – sign has up to 3 lines of information, such as business name, phone number, website, etc.
- Your business name listed on sponsor sheet distributed to all golfing participants
- Exposure to over 100 golfers and business people from the community
- Knowledge that you have helped people locally with hearing or speech disorders
- Option to set up a booth near the tee box to promote your business

Gold Sponsor - \$300.00 Donation

- Sponsor sign at tee box to advertise your business – sign has up to 3 lines of information, such as business name, phone number, website, etc.
- Your business name highlighted on sponsor sheet distributed to all participants
- Exposure to over 100 golfers and business people from the community
- Knowledge that you have helped people locally with hearing or speech disorders
- Option to set up a booth near the tee box to promote your business
- Exclusive signage at tee box for "Closest to the Pin" or "Longest Drive" sponsor

Platinum Sponsor - \$500.00 Donation

- Sponsor sign at tee box to advertise your business
- Your business name with logo on sponsor sheet distributed to all participants
- Exposure to over 100 golfers and business people from the community
- Knowledge that you have helped people locally with speech, hearing, or language disorders
- Option to set up a booth near the tee box to promote your business
- Exclusive signage as a "Beverage Cart" sponsor (beverages supplied by Sertoma)
- Recognition given at post-tournament meal and awards ceremony, and a representative from your business is invited to attend

Service To Mankind Sponsor - \$1000.00 Donation

- Sponsor sign at tee box to advertise your business
- Your business name with logo in large print on sponsor sheet
- Exposure to over 100 golfers and business people from the community
- Knowledge that you have helped people locally with hearing or speech disorders
- Option to set up a booth near the tee box to promote your business
- Exclusive signage and recognition at Putting Contest, an exciting tournament mini-event
- Special recognition given at post-tournament meal and awards ceremony, and 2 representatives from your business are invited to attend

The Lexington Sertoma Club is a 501-c-3 organization, and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please call Matt Quinton to request sponsorship at (803) 260-7178, or email mquinton@smcinc.com.

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.

NEW

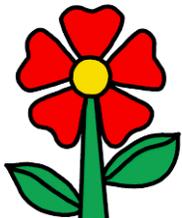
SOUTH CAROLINA POW MEDAL

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

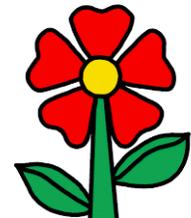


POW lists. Any former POW who received an honorable discharge and is a South Carolina citizen can apply for the medal. Former prisoners from WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, or other conflicts are also eligible. Surviving spouses or descendants can also apply for the medal once.

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.



SPRING



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.

Medical Expense Report (MER)



For Veterans and Surviving Spouses receiving Non-Service Connection Pension Benefits, the VA may be able to pay you at a higher rate if you identify expenses the VA considers allowable. The higher rate is only paid if you are NOT receiving the maximum benefit from the VA. Medical and dental expenses paid by you may be deductible from the income VA counts when determining your benefit entitlement.

Any medical or dental expenses that you paid for a member of your household (self, spouse, child, etc.) for which you were not reimbursed may also be counted. Below

are examples of expenses you should include, if applicable:

• Hospital expenses • Doctor's office fees • Dental fees • Prescription/non-prescription drug costs • Vision care costs • Medical insurance premiums • Monthly Medicare deduction • Nursing home costs • Hearing aid costs • Dental fees • Home health service expenses • Expenses related to transportation to a hospital, doctor, or other medical facility.



These expenses may be listed on a **VA Form 21P-8416 – Medical Expense Report (MER)** - and submitted anytime for the previous year. For example: Medical Expense Reports for 2014 may be submitted anytime before the end of 2015.



IMPORTANT NOTES

- Do not include any expenses for which you were reimbursed. If you receive reimbursement after you have filed a MER, promptly notify the VA office handling your claim.
- If you are not sure whether a particular expense can be allowed, furnish a complete description of the purposes of the payment. The VA will let you know if an expense cannot be allowed.
- You may be asked to verify the amounts you actually paid. Keep all receipts or other documentation of payments for at least three years after the VA makes a decision on your medical expense claim. If you are unable to provide documentation of the claimed medical expenses when asked to do so by the VA, your benefits may be retroactively reduced or terminated.

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.



Financial aid. College applications. Choosing a major.

It can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be.

Whether you need help applying for financial aid, completing college applications, or just some helpful guidance, Midlands Technical College's Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) staff is ready to assist you.

What is EOC?

EOC provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified individuals who want to begin or continue a college education. The program also provides in-depth financial aid information and assistance. EOC collaborates with various agencies in Fairfield and Lexington counties to provide services.

What are some of the services EOC provides?

- › College Admissions Counseling
- › College Transfer Assistance
- › Financial Aid Assistance and Counseling
- › Financial Decision Making Assistance
- › GED Referral Assistance
- › Homeless and Foster Youth Educational Assistance
- › Military and Veteran Referral Services
- › Ex-Offender Referral Services

Am I eligible for EOC assistance?

Many area residents are eligible for assistance. Please contact EOC to discuss your eligibility.

How do I apply for the program?

Please call 803.822.3749 or 1.800.922.8038 ext. 3749 to schedule an appointment.

Where will I go for my appointment?

EOC's main office is on the MTC Airport Campus in Lexington Hall Room 170; its other office is located on the MTC Beltline Campus, Student Center, Room 227. EOC also offers regularly scheduled hours at numerous outreach sites in Fairfield and Lexington counties.



Disclaimer: Although the EOC staff is employed by Midlands Technical College, they do not recruit participants for the college. As an EOC participant, you can receive assistance in applying to any continuing education program, college, and/or university. If you have a disability requiring special accommodations, please contact MTC EOC.

For more information, please call 803.822.3749 or 1.800.922.8038 ext. 3749,
or visit MIDLANDSTECH.EDU/eoc

Featured Medal:

Navy and Marine Corps Medal

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is the highest non-combat decoration awarded for heroism by the United State Department of the Navy to the members of the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps. The decoration was established by an act of Congress on August 7, 1942, and is authorized under 10 U.S.C. § 6246. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal are generally considered the equivalent of the U.S. Army's Soldier's Medal, the U.S. Force's Air Force's Airman's Medal, and the Coast Guard Medal.

As the senior non-combat award for heroism, this award hinges on the actual level of personal "life-threatening" risk experienced by the awardee. For heroic performance to rise to this level it must be clearly established that the act involved very specific life-threatening risk to the awardee.

During the mid-20th century, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal has been awarded instead of the Silver or Gold Lifesaving Medal, for sea rescues involving risk to life. This is due primarily to the creation of a variety of additional military decorations that are often considered more prestigious than the Lifesaving Medal.

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal was first bestowed during World War II. A famous recipient was President John F. Kennedy who was awarded the medal as Commanding Officer of Motor Torpedo Boat PT-109 during World War II.

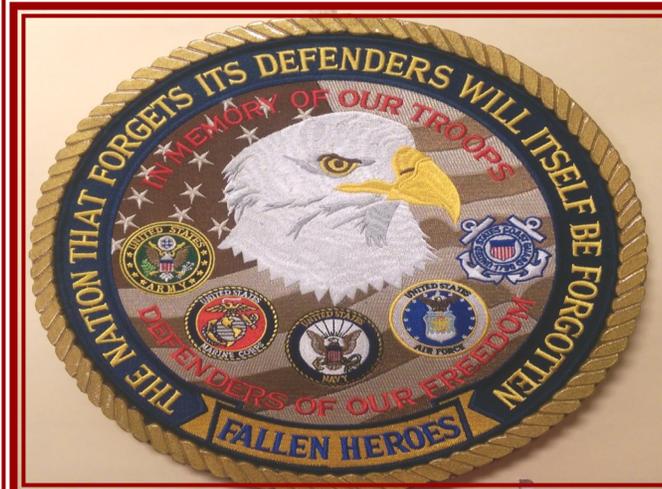
The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is an octagonal bronze medal. The obverse depicts an eagle holding a fouled anchor over a globe. The word *Heroism* is inscribed below the globe. The ribbon of the medal is three equal stripes of navy blue, old gold, and apple red. Additional awards of the medal are denoted by gold or silver 5/16 inch stars.



Picture of the Navy and Marine Corps 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 but can assist with some forms.



Coming in the Next Issue...
Pension benefits; ID cards; & reconsideration vs. appeals