



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

January/February 2017



Lexington, SC.

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At A Glance Calendar January/February

For a list of events in Lexington County for January and February

See page 18 - Happenings Around Lexington County

Weekly on Tuesdays in January

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Monday, January 2nd

County Offices Closed

Thursday, January 5th

Gaston Outreach

Friday, January 6th

Chapin Outreach

Tuesday, January 10th

County Council Meeting

Friday, January 13th

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

Saturday, January 14th

Dang-it Doll Workshop
For more information see page 15

Monday, January 16th

County Offices Closed

Tuesday, January 24th

County Council Meeting

Weekly on Tuesdays in February

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Thursday, February 2nd

Gaston Outreach

Friday, February 3rd

Chapin Outreach

Friday, February 10th

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

Saturday, February 11th

Dang-it Doll Workshop
For more information see page 15

Tuesday, February 14th

County Council Meeting

Monday, February 20th

County Offices Closed

Tuesday, February 28th

County Council Meeting

Purple—Holidays/Special Days
Blue—Outreach dates

Red—County Offices Closed, No van scheduled and Special Notices

Black—Director's appearances in the County

Brown—County Council Meetings

Pink—Special Events throughout the County

Orange—Director Out of Office

Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings

**From the
Director...**

As the new year begins in our service to Veterans and their survivors, we are thankful for the work we have the opportunity each day to do. It is an honor serving Veterans and in 2017, our office will make the biggest change it has known in quite some time. Our building is slated for renovation and this will encompass most of the year so as you come for an appointment, please be patient. Our office will be moving to the front of the building after this renovation is complete and it will be a modern office complex that the Veterans' Affairs office has never seen. We will have a conference room, storage room, file room, employee bathroom and many other things we don't currently have. We are excited about this because Veterans deserve to come to a place where they feel comfortable and we will be providing that later in 2017. No services to Veterans will be interrupted as construction takes place and once complete, we will have an open house and invite the media and the community.

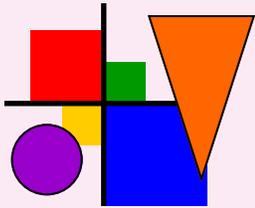
I was very fortunate this past Veterans Day to spend part of it with a dear Veteran friend, Horace Beauford of Lyman, SC. Mr. Beauford and his daughter, Rene were on the 2014 trip to Normandy with me and 60 other folks. He and I became friends and invited me to visit sometime so we could share stories. His D-Day story is quite incredible and his memory of that day and after is quite sharp. I sat in amazement of this World War II hero as he regaled to me some of the things he experienced at Utah Beach on June 6, 1944. We plan to go back in 2019 for the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

I hope your Christmas was special surrounded by family and friends. My family is growing and this meets with challenges to all get together at the same time but we managed and it was a special time.

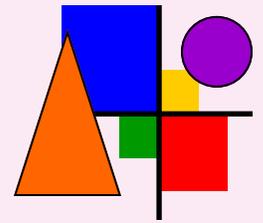
Happy New Year!



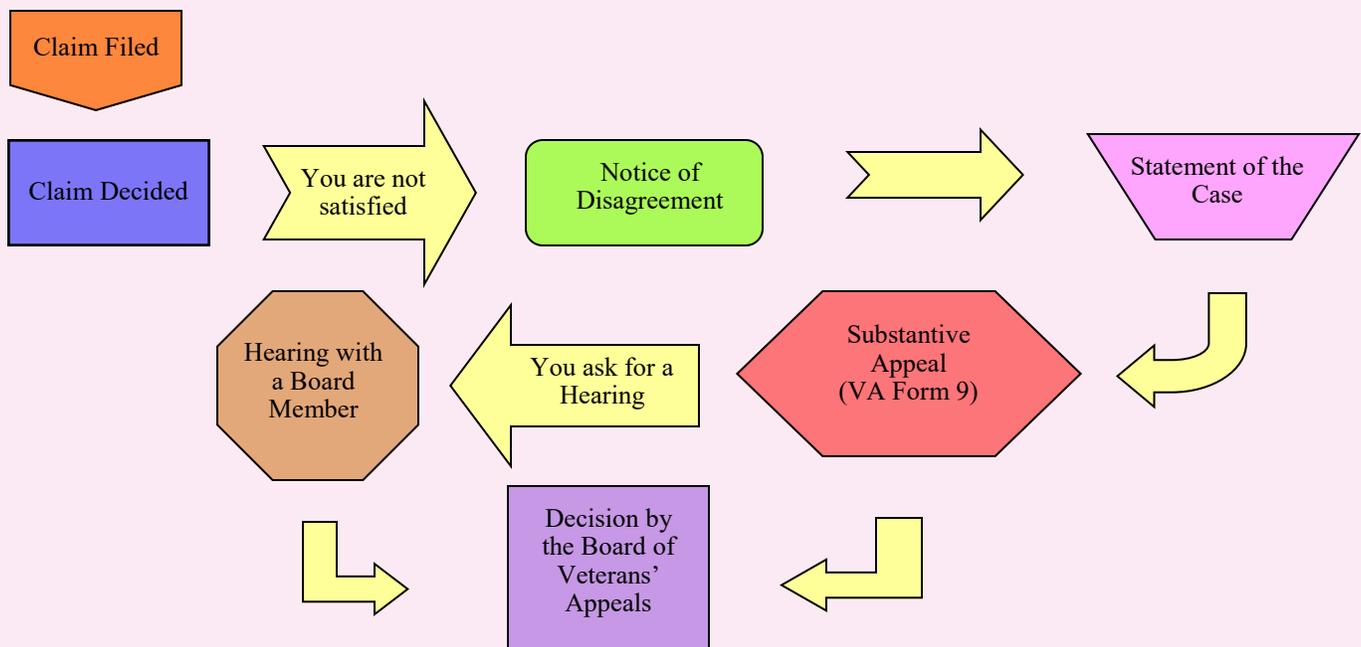
"THANK A VETERAN"



VA Appeals Process

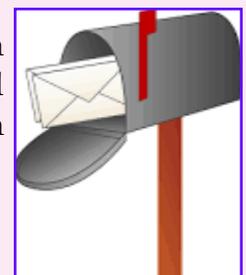


An appeal is a request for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review a local VA office decision on your claim. You appeal because you are not satisfied with the decision by the local VA regional office. The two most common reasons people appeal are: (1) the VA denied benefits for a disability you believe began in service; or (2) you believe that your disability is more severe than the VA rated it. You can appeal for any reason. The Board of Veterans' Appeals (also known as the Board or BVA) is a part of the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is located in Washington, D.C. Members of the Board review appeals for VA benefits and make decisions on those appeals. Below is a chart of how the appeals process works. An explanation of each step will follow.



Claim Filed - To apply for benefits, you file a claim at your local VA regional or county office. This is when you ask for the benefit you want. There is at least one VA regional office in each state, Puerto Rico, and Manila. You can also file your claim on the internet at www.vba.va.gov. You can also ask for help with your claim. Help is available from Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), such as The American Legion, VFW, DAV, etc. and from your local county office.

Claim Decided - The local VA regional office makes a decision on your claim and sends the decision letter to you. The local VA regional office's decision will allow or deny your claim. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you can then appeal.



Continued on page 4

VA Appeals process continued from page 3

Notice of Disagreement - If you disagree with the rating decision, you can write a statement to your local VA regional office saying that you disagree and that you want to appeal that decision. This statement is called a Notice of Disagreement (NOD). The NOD is completed on VA Form 21-0958. The NOD is sent to your local VA regional office and must be submitted within one year of the date your local VA regional office mailed you its original decision. After you send in your NOD, you may request that your file be reviewed by a Decision Review Officer (DRO) from your local VA regional office. This is called the non-traditional appeal process. DRO's offer a second review of your entire file and can also hold a personal hearing on your claim. These hearings are held at your local VA regional office. The DRO will evaluate the evidence you present and make a decision on your appeal without waiting to send the case to the BVA. If you are not satisfied with the DRO's decision, you will be sent a Statement of the Case and you continue through the traditional appeal process.



Statement of the Case - With the traditional appeal process, after the local VA regional office gets your NOD, it will create a Statement of the Case (SOC). The SOC is a detailed explanation of the evidence, laws, and regulations used by the local VA regional office in deciding your claim. The SOC will be mailed to you along with a VA Form 9, Substantive Appeal Form by your local VA regional office.

REMEMBER THE TIME LIMIT FOR FILING VA

Substantive Appeal (VA Form 9) - When you get the SOC from your local VA regional office, a VA Form 9 will be included. The VA Form 9 is also available through the internet at www.vba.va.gov. A VA Form 9 is the last step in the appeal process. To finish the process you must fill out the VA Form 9 and send it back to your local VA regional office. When you fill out your VA Form 9 you should state the benefit you want, any mistakes you find in the SOC, and if you want a personal hearing. Your local VA regional office must get your VA Form 9 within 60 days of the date that they mailed you your SOC or within one year of the date that they mailed you the original decision denying your claim, whichever is later.

Personal Hearings - You can request a personal hearing in connection with your appeal. A personal hearing is a meeting between you, your representative (if you have one), and the person from the VA who will decide your case. There are two types of personal hearings: (1) a hearing with someone from your local VA regional office (this is the DRO hearing); or (2) a hearing with a member of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. You can request a personal hearing with a local VA office at any time by sending a written request to your local VA regional office. You can request a hearing with a member of the Board of Veterans' Appeals when you fill out your VA Form 9. If you want a personal hearing with a member of the Board, you can choose from several different types. You can elect a hearing in Washington, D.C., where the Board of Veterans Appeals is located; a videoconference hearing with you at your local VA regional office and the Board member in Washington, D.C.; or a hearing at your local VA regional office with the Board Member present. Because of scheduling delays, a videoconference hearing is the quickest way to get a hearing with a Board Member.



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VA Appeals process continued from page 4



Personal hearings with a Board Member are informal. They are not like the courtroom hearings you see on TV or in trials. The Board Members will identify themselves and will make sure you agree about what claims are on appeal. The Board Member will tell you about what happens during the hearing and you will be asked to take an oath to tell the truth. You will be given a chance to make sure any information you think is important is heard by the Board Member. If you have a representative, the representative will ask you questions to help explain your claim. If not, the Board Member will ask you to tell them about your claim. The Board Member may or may not ask questions during the hearing and you can add evidence to your claim during this time. This evidence will be added to your file and reviewed by the Board Member when a decision is made on your claim. The Board Member ***does not*** make a decision on your claim at the hearing. A transcript of the hearing will be made and sent to the Board of Veterans' Appeals with your file. When the Board Member gets all this information, they will review it and make a decision.

Decision by the Board of Veterans' Appeals - After reviewing the evidence in your file, the Board Member will make a decision on your appeal. The Board will send you a copy of the decision. The decision will allow, deny or remand your claim. If your claim is allowed or denied, the Board's decision is final. However a remand is not a final decision. Sometimes the Board finds that it does not have enough information about your claim to make a decision. When this happens the Board will either try to get more information itself or send your claim back to the local VA regional office so they can try and get the needed information. When your claim is sent back to the local VA regional office, it is called a remand. If your claim is denied by the Board, you can do one of four things: (1) go back to your local VA regional office and try to reopen your claim with new and material evidence, (2) file a motion asking the Board to reconsider your claim or review your case again because there was a clear and unmistakable error (CUE) in the Board's decision,; (3) file an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims; or (4) do nothing.

Helpful Hints for the VA Appeal Process

- 1 - Have a representative help you with your claim and appeal. A representative can answer questions and can help make the process move faster. Representatives from Veterans Service Organization have offices in most local VA regional offices or use your local county VA office.
- 2 - Give as much detail as possible about evidence that you want the VA to get before they make a decision on your claim. For example, full names, addresses, and dates are very important.
- 3 - Make sure you let your local VA regional office know if you move to a new address while your appeal is being decided.
- 4 - Put your claim number/social security number on all letters or other evidence you send to the VA.
- 5 - Make sure you keep a copy of any evidence you give to the VA for your records.
- 6 - Try to identify as early as possible all the evidence you want the VA to look at when they make a decision on your claim. This will help speed up the time it takes for the VA to make a decision on your claim.
- 7 - You can request information about your appeal at the Board of Veterans' Appeals by calling 1-202-565-5436.





IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION

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 at 803-785-8400.



WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER VAN 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 U.S. Department of Treasury, in partnership with the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority and SC Housing Corp., has made over \$295 million available to help eligible South Carolina homeowners avoid serious first mortgage delinquency and foreclosures.

Qualifications

SC Help is intended to assist borrowers who are facing first mortgage delinquency or possible foreclosure. There is no household income limit, the property must be an owner occupied primary residence, applicants must have a minimum 24 months homeownership history and applicants do NOT have to be delinquent.

How to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to apply electronically at: www.schelp.com. Applicants without the internet may call 1-855-435-7472, toll free number for assistance. There is NO FEE required at any point during the SC HELP process.

November is National Oatmeal Month!



December is National Cherry Month!



How to obtain DD-214s; awards and medals; corrections or upgrades; and emergency requests

There are several ways to get a replacement DD214.

1. Check with your last base. If you didn't separate too long ago, there is a chance that the military separations section of your old base may have a digital copy of your DD 214. It is best to go in person and make the request rather than to do it by phone.
2. Look at the last place of residence you put on record. Many Veterans forget to change their place of residence, which can be different from where they started their career. Your copy of your DD 214 could have been mailed there if the address change wasn't made.
3. Research the VA Regional Office for a copy of your DD 214 if you filed a disability claim within the past five years. You can't even register into their system until you have a DD 214.
4. Log onto the Veteran Records website. Follow instructions on how to get your DD 214. The instructions do include faxing or mailing forms that require your signature and your Social Security number. They have to be received within 20 days of the request, so don't delay.
5. VAMC if they are enrolled

A Veteran may obtain their military personnel records through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri. Military personnel records can include DD-214s or separation documents, service personnel records found within the official military personnel file and medical records. Military personnel records can be used for proving military service or as a valuable tool in genealogical research. Please note that NPRC holds historical military personnel records of nearly 100 million Veterans.



A Veteran may request their military service records online, by mail or by fax. This request may include DD-214 or separation documents, personnel records, and medical records. A Veteran may submit their request online by going to the NPRC website at www.archives.gov. A Veteran may also submit a request by mail or fax using Form SF-180. The address for the NPRC is: 1 Archive Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138. Their telephone and fax numbers are: (314) 801-0800 and (314) 801-9195.

If your request is urgent (for example, for a funeral) and there is a deadline associated with your request, please provide this information in the purpose section of the Form SF-180 and fax it to the Customer Service Team at (314) 801-0764. Their goal is to complete all urgent requests within two working days. Please contact the customer service staff at (314) 801-0800 if you have questions or require same day service. Due to the large number of calls received at this number, hold times are often long. However, once you reach a technician they will be happy to assist you with emergency service.



The NPRC does not issue service medals; that is a function of each military service department. Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the Veteran served. Use the addresses listed below, and mail your request accordingly.

Army and Air Force
National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard
Navy Personnel Command
Liaison Office Room 350
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138.

The National Archives and Records Administration only *stores* Military Service Records – they cannot make changes or corrections to these records or to your discharge status. You will need to apply to the review board for your respective service branch for corrections or changes.

Army: Contact the Army Review Board Agency at (703) 607-1600

Air Force: Contact the Board for Corrections for Air Force Records at (240) 857-3502

Navy and Marine Corps: Contact the Board for Correction of Naval Records at (703) 604-6884 or (703) 604-6885

Coast Guard: Contact the Board for Correction of Military Records of the Coast Guard at (202) 477-4099

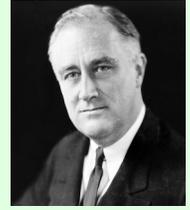
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ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of January and February?



January 1, 1993 - Czechoslovakia broke into separate Czech and Slovak republics.



January 6, 1941 - President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his State of the Union address defining four essential freedoms worth defending; freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.



January 10, 1863 - The world's first underground railway service opened in London.

January 16, 1853 - French industrialist Andre Michelin was born in Paris. He started the Michelin Tire Company in 1888.

January 21, 1824 - Confederate Army General "Stonewall" Jackson was born in Clarksburg, Virginia (as Thomas Jonathan Jackson).

January 27, 1967 - Three American astronauts were killed as a fire erupted inside Apollo 1 during a launch simulation test at Cape Kennedy, Florida.

January 29, 1919 - The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Prohibition Amendment) was ratified.

January 30, 1835 - President Andrew Jackson survived the first assassination attempt on a U.S. President.

February 1, 2003 - Sixteen minutes before it was scheduled to land, the Space Shuttle *Columbia* broke apart in flight over west Texas, killing all seven crew members.

February 6, 1933 - The 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted. It set the date for the Presidential Inauguration as January 20th, instead of the old date of March 4th.

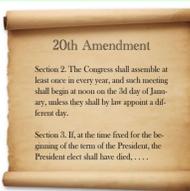
February 10, 1942 - The first Medal of Honor during World War II was awarded to 2nd Lt. Alexander Nininger (posthumously) for heroism during the Battle of Bataan.

February 15, 1820 - Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, Massachusetts.

February 20, 1962 - Astronaut John Glenn became the first American launched into orbit. Traveling aboard the "Friendship 7" spacecraft.

February 27, 1950 - The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, limiting the president to two terms or a maximum of ten years in office.

February 28, 1994 - NATO conducted its first combat action in its 45-year history as four Bosnian Serb jets were shot down by American fighters in a no-fly zone.



THE 22ND AMENDMENT



DD214s continued from page 7

Tips & Warnings:

1. Be patient with the process. It can take a few weeks to get a copy of your records. It may be even longer if you were discharged before 1973, because a fire at the Central Repository for Records in St. Louis destroyed 80 percent of the records housed at that time.
2. Record a copy of your DD214 with your local VA office in case you misplace it in the future.
3. The National Personnel Records Center usually processes requests within 10 working days of receipt. Many factors may alter that time including work load, current volume of requests, and whether your records are coming from a stateside base or an overseas location in the case of recently retired or separated military members.



Job Hunting?

The VA medical center and regional office is hiring Veterans.

Visit USAjobs.com for more information.



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**; you can chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is also available.

IT'S YOUR CALL



For basic information, questions, and copies of our newsletters, 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 are also on our webpage.

Direct Deposit



What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to your Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that is being deposited. If you are changing your direct deposit, you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.

Free counseling for war time Veterans & their dependents

The Columbia Vet Center offers a wide range of services to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian life. You have earned these benefits and there is no cost to you or your family members.

Services provided are:

- Individual & group counseling
- Family counseling for military related
- Bereavement counseling for families
- Military sexual trauma
- Outreach & education
- Substance abuse assessment & referral
- Employment assessment & referral
- VBA benefits explanation & referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues

The Columbia Vet Center is located at 1710-A Richland Street, Columbia. Their telephone number is 803-765-9944.



Due to issues following Hurricane Matthew in SC, the DAV is providing disaster relief to eligible Veterans. Should you have any questions regarding this program, please contact the DAV at 803-647-2422. Their grant application can be found online at okdav.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Disaster_Relief_Grant_App.pdf or we have copies of the applications in our office.



Disabled American Veterans

New Regulation Decreases Cost of Outpatient Medication Copay for Most Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulation on copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions. The VA currently charges non-exempt Veterans either \$8 or \$9 for each 30-day or less supply of outpatient medication, and under current regulations, a calculation based on the medication of the Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI-P) would be used to determine the copayment amount in future years.

This new regulation eliminates the formula used to calculate future rate increases and establishes three classes of outpatient medications identified as Tier 1, Preferred Generics; Tier 2, Non-Preferred Generics including over-the-counter medications; and Tier 3, Brand Name.

Copayment amounts for each tier would be fixed and vary depending upon the class of outpatient medication in the tier.

These copayment amounts will be effective February 27, 2017:

\$5 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 1 outpatient medication

\$8 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 2 outpatient medication

\$11 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 3 outpatient medication

These changes apply to Veterans without a service-connected condition, or Veterans with a disability rated less than 50 percent who are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition, and whose annual income exceeds the limit set by law. Medication copayments do not apply to former Prisoners of War, catastrophically disabled Veterans, or those covered by other exceptions as set by law.

Copayments stop each calendar year for Veterans in [Priority Groups 2-8](#) once a \$700 cap is reached.

More information on the new tiered medication copayment can be found at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-12/pdf/2016-29515.pdf>



Funding Opportunity for Community Partners Working to End Veteran Homelessness



Building on President Obama's commitment to end Veteran homelessness, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is announcing the availability of funding for non-profit organizations and other groups that serve Veterans through VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. The SSVF program assists very low-income Veteran families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These SSVF grants are available to current grantees seeking renewals and make new funding available for eight high-need communities.

The VA relies on strong, targeted collaborations in key areas at federal and local levels and engages community partners to develop innovative and forward-thinking solutions that can lead to scalable and replicable models of service. SSVF grantees currently operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam, working within their communities to end or prevent homelessness among Veteran families.

SSVF grantees typically serve Veterans with incomes below 30 percent of the area median income. Grantees must follow the housing first approach, which centers on permanently housing homeless Veterans quickly without preconditions and providing supportive services as needed. Additional SSVF requirements are that grantees engage in outreach to find and serve Veterans in need, provide Veterans with case management, and assist them in obtaining VA and other public benefits. SSVF served nearly 150,000 Veterans and their family members in fiscal year 2016. As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down significantly since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. Since 2010, homelessness among Veterans had dropped by 47 percent.

For more information about VA's homeless programs, visit www.va.gov/homeless



VA Launches Veterans Legacy Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the launch of the Veterans Legacy Program to memorialize Veterans' service and sacrifice through public educational programming. The program uses the rich resources found throughout VA national cemeteries, Soldiers' lots and monument sites.

"The Veterans Legacy Program is meant to bring to life the stories of Veterans buried in the VA national cemeteries through lesson plans, interactive maps and video vignettes," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert A. McDonald. "Behind every marker is a story—a story of what it meant to be a Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman at a particular moment in time. Our goal is to ensure that our nation does not forget their stories and their sacrifice." Using online educational products such as lesson plans, interactive maps and short video vignettes, the VA, through the Veterans Legacy Program, will engage the general public, students and educators. The VA launched this initiative earlier this year at two pilot sites: Beaufort National Cemetery in South Carolina and Riverside National Cemetery in California. Over the next several years, online educational products and programs will be developed for all the VA national cemeteries.



The VA has also formed a partnership with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to co-sponsor a "Teachers Institute," a workshop for educators who will conduct research at the VA and the ABMC cemeteries. Information about the program may be found at www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy/. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in the VA's 133 national cemeteries. The VA also provides funding to establish, expand, improve, and maintain 100 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam and Saipan. For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, the VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2015, the VA honored more than 353,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

For more information about the history of VA national cemeteries, visit www.cem.va.gov/history.



"America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

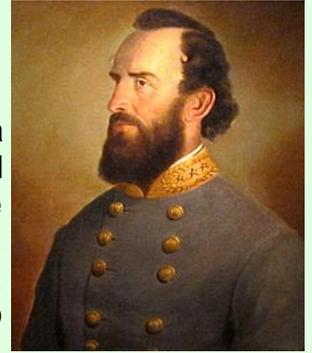
-Abraham Lincoln

There is a new number to call for billing issues through the VAMC for any private health care that was fee based out.

**That number is
1-877-881-7618
9am to 5pm EST.**



The History of Stonewall Jackson



Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson was born on January 21, 1824, in Clarksburg, Virginia (now West Virginia). When Jackson was two years old, his six-year-old sister died of typhoid fever. His father, Jonathan Jackson, an attorney, perished of the same disease a short time later, leaving his mother, Julia Neale Jackson, with three children and considerable debt. After his mother remarried in 1830, to a man who reportedly disliked his stepchildren, Jackson and his siblings were sent to live with various relatives. The future Civil War hero was raised by an uncle in the town of Jackson’s Mill, located in present-day West Virginia.



In 1842, Jackson enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Older than many of the other students, he initially struggled with the curriculum and endured frequent ridicule for his modest background and relatively poor education. However, Jackson worked hard and eventually met with academic success, graduating in 1846. Jackson left West Point just as the Mexican War was starting and he was sent to Mexico as a lieutenant with the 1st U.S. Artillery. Jackson continued his military service until he accepted a professorship at the Virginia Military Institute in 1851. Jackson spent 10 years as a professor of artillery tactics and natural philosophy (similar to modern-day physics) at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. He was better at teaching artillery than natural philosophy, and was disliked by some cadets for his brusqueness, lack of sympathy and eccentric behavior.

In 1853, Jackson married his first wife, Elinor Junkin, who died in childbirth 14 months later. In 1857, Jackson married again, this time to Mary Anna Morrison. The following year, the couple had a daughter; however, the child lived for only a month. Jackson’s one surviving daughter, Julia Laura, was born less than a year before her father’s death.

When Virginia seceded from the Union in 1861, Jackson accepted a commission as a colonel in the Confederate army, showing his loyalty to his state over the federal government. Jackson served only briefly as a colonel before receiving a promotion to brigadier general under General Joseph E. Johnston. Jackson earned his nickname at the First Battle of Bull Run (also known as Manassas) in July 1861 when he rushed his troops forward to close a gap in the line against a determined Union attack. Upon observing Jackson, one of his fellow generals reportedly said, “Look, men, there is Jackson standing like a stone wall!”—a comment that spawned Jackson’s nickname. Jackson was commissioned a major general in October 1861.

In the spring of 1862, Jackson spearheaded the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, firmly establishing himself as a strong and independent commander. With an army of some 15,000 to 18,000 troops, Jackson repeatedly outmaneuvered a superior Union force of more than 60,000 men. Jackson’s army moved so quickly during the campaign that they dubbed themselves “foot cavalry.” President Abraham Lincoln had split the Union army into three parts, and Jackson used his mobility to attack and confuse the divided forces over the course of the campaign. He won several key victories over armies of larger size. By the campaign’s end in June, he had earned the admiration of Union generals and had become the South’s first great war hero. Jackson had prevented the Northerners from taking the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, and had done so in the face of unfavorable odds.



Jackson joined Lee’s army in June 1862, and Lee was determined to keep him in the thick of the fighting in Virginia. Chosen for his tactical prowess and bravery, Jackson did not disappoint. From August 1862 until May 1863, he and his troops played key roles at the Second Battle of Bull Run, the Battle of Antietam, the Battle of Fredericksburg and the Battle of Chancellorsville.

Continued on page 16

Flu & You

Q: Should I get the flu vaccine?

Yes. Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and death. Even healthy people can get sick from the flu and spread it to others.

The flu shot is recommended for all persons aged 6 months and older with rare exception.

Each year in the U.S., the flu causes more than 226,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths.



FLU SHOTS FOR VA PATIENTS



No cost to you*

We'll even automatically update your records with the VA.

Nearby locations | Walk in anytime



VA
Caring for the Nation's
Veterans

Widely
Available
at VA Medical Centers

A flu shot is the best way to protect yourself against seasonal influenza (flu).



Where can I get my flu shot?

You can get your flu shot at:

DORN Primary Care and CBOCs from 8:00-4:00

Dorn Mental Health clinics Tues-Thurs from 9:00-11:00, 1:00-2:00

You do not need an appointment!



Can a flu shot give me the flu?

NO. Some people get minor body aches, a headache or low grade fever, but this is **NOT** the flu.

If you have already received your flu vaccination from another facility ... not at Dorn or one of Dorn's Community Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), please alert your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) to ensure that your vaccination record is updated in your medical records to reflect month and location of flu vaccination. Alternatively, this information may be faxed to 803-695-7904.

Travel Benefits for VA Healthcare

If you meet the criteria below, you may be eligible for mileage reimbursement or special mode transport in association with obtaining VA health care services.

YOU QUALIFY IF:	YOU QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL MODE TRANSPORTATION (AMBULANCE, WHEELCHAIR VAN ETC.) IF:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. you have a service-connected (SC) rating of 30 percent or more, or 2. you are traveling for treatment of a SC condition, or 3. you receive a VA pension, or 4. your income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate, or 5. you are traveling for a scheduled compensation or pension examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ your medical condition requires an ambulance or a specially equipped van as determined by a VA clinician, and ◇ you meet one of the eligibility criteria in 1 through 4 above, and ◇ the travel is pre-authorized (authorization is not required for emergencies if a delay would be hazardous to life or health)

Mileage Rates

General Travel

\$0.415 (41.5 cents) per mile

Scheduled appointments qualify for round-trip mileage. Unscheduled visits may be limited to return mileage only.

Deductible

\$3.00 one-way (\$6.00 round trip)

Deductible requirement is subject to a monthly cap of \$18.00. Upon reaching \$18.00 in deductibles or 6 one-way (3 round) trips, whichever comes first, travel payments made for the balance of that particular month will be free of deductible charges.

Waiver of Deductible

A waiver of the deductible will be provided if you are eligible for travel and you:

1. are in receipt of a VA pension or;
2. are a NSC Veteran and your previous year's income does not exceed, or your projected current calendar year's income, in the year of application will not exceed the applicable VA pension rate, or
3. are a SC Veteran and your previous year's income does not exceed, or your projected current calendar year's income, in the year of application will not exceed the applicable national means test income threshold or,
4. are traveling for a scheduled compensation and pension exam

Did you know...

A new VA state nursing home facility will be constructed in the next 2 to 3 years using the VA construction grant program. The facility will be located in Columbia on property already owned by the VA off of I-20 in Richland County. Another facility will be built in Gaffney and a third facility will be built in Florence near the Florence National Cemetery.

DID YOU KNOW?



Lexington County Veterans Group



All Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon 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.

Dang-it Dolls Workshops



Saturday, January 14th and Saturday, February 11th 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. ★



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

Happy Valentine's Day

The History of Stonewall Jackson continued from page 12



By October 1862, Jackson was a lieutenant general and led a significant portion of Lee's army. His widely publicized exploits had elevated him to legendary status among Southern soldiers and citizens alike. Jackson's bravery and success inspired devotion from his soldiers, but to his officers, he was known as overly secretive and difficult to please. Historians call the Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia in May 1863, of Lee's finest moments as a Confederate general, and his success owed much to Jackson's participation. On May 2, Jackson stealthily and quickly took 28,000 troops on an approximately 15-mile forced march to the Union's exposed flank while Lee engaged in diversionary attacks on his front. Jackson's attack on the Union rear inflicted massive casualties on the superior force, and they were forced to withdraw only days later.

But the victory was not without cost. Jackson's brutal attack ended at sunset, and he took some men into the forest to scout ahead. A North Carolina regiment mistook them for enemy cavalry and opened fire, severely wounding Jackson. In all, Jackson was hit by three bullets, two in the left arm and one in the right hand. Doctors determined that a bullet had shattered the bone just below his left shoulder, and they quickly amputated Jackson's left arm. He was transferred to a field hospital at a nearby plantation to recover. The arm that was amputated on May 2 was buried separately by Jackson's chaplain, in the Wilderness of Orange County, near the field hospital. Jackson initially appeared to be healing, but he died from pneumonia on May 10, 1863, at the age of 39. Southerners mourned the death of their war hero, while Lee faced fighting the war without a highly valued general and comrade. Military historians consider Jackson to be one of the most gifted tactical commanders in US history. Jackson was buried in the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery in Lexington, Virginia.

Jackson appears prominently in the enormous bas-relief carving on the face of Stone Mountain, in Georgia, riding with Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee. The carving depicts the three on horseback, appearing to ride in a group from right to left across the mountainside. The lower parts of the horses' bodies merge into the mountainside at the foot of the carving. The three riders are shown bare-headed and holding their hats to their chests. It is the largest such carving in the world and was completed in 1972.



VA Expands Health Care

For Camp Lejeune Veterans

The VA issued a final rule to expand VA health care eligibility for Veterans affected by contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune. Veterans who served at least 30 days at Camp Lejeune from August 1, 1953 through December 31, 1987, are eligible to receive no cost health care for 15 medical conditions that have been linked to the contaminated water. Previously, only Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune from January 1, 1957 were covered. Veterans who have been diagnosed with any of the 15 medical conditions may receive reimbursement for the cost of treatment if the care was provided on or after December 16, 2014, when the law expanding eligibility was signed. However, Veterans must submit a request for reimbursement no later than July 18, 2018. For more information on benefits and services for Camp Lejeune Veterans, visit: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune>.



This rule does not impact disability compensation benefits. The VA is still in the process of finalizing a rule to grant Camp Lejeune Veterans presumptive disability compensation for 8 of the 15 medical conditions found to be associated with exposure to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. However, Veterans who have been diagnosed with any of the 15 conditions should file a claim when possible to preserve the effective date.



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.

County Council Needs You!



Veterans are still 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 please be present around 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400, if you are interested.

The office would like to thank Rick Niehe and Ed Lundeen. These gentlemen volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance for the months of November and December.



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 10 a.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.*

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.





Fisher House

In September 2016, the WJB Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center completed the application process for a Fisher House to be built on the facility property in Columbia, South Carolina. On November 8, 2016 facility leadership was notified that Dorn's proposal had been approved.

A Fisher House is "a home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. The homes are normally located within walking distance of the treatment facility or have transportation available. There are 71 Fisher Houses located on 24 military installations and 29 VA medical centers.

Typically, the houses are 5,000 to 16,800 square foot homes donated by the Fisher family and Fisher House Foundation. Each house is designed to provide 8 to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region. The houses can accommodate 16 to 42 family members. They feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room and an inviting living room with library, and toys for children. Newest houses are 100% handicap accessible and include elevators. A Fisher House is a temporary residence and is not a treatment facility, hospice or counseling center. The program began in 1990, and has offered more than six million days of lodging to more than 277,000 families.

The addition of a Fisher House to the Columbia VAMC campus will be a major enhancement for the families of patients receiving medical care at the facility and will be an asset to the community. The WJB Dorn VAMC is grateful to the Fisher House Foundation, those involved in the application process, and community leaders who are in support for this important project. For more information on the Fisher house visit <https://www.fisherhouse.org/programs/houses/>.

CLOSINGS...

County offices will be closed on the following dates:

Monday, January 2, 2017 - New Year's Day Observed

Monday, January 16, 2017 - MLK Day

Monday, February 20, 2017 - President's Day



Happenings Around Lexington County

During the Months of January & February

Saturday, January 28th
through
Sunday, January 29th

Civil War Encampment & Candlelight Tour
Lexington County Museum. 6 to 9pm
For more information contact them @
803-359-8369.



Saturday, February 25th

17th Annual Lexington Race Against Hunger
Includes a 5K fitness run/walk, 10K run, and
1 mile fun run. For more information visit
their website @ www.lrah.org.



HELP NEEDED

Help is needed at Lexington Interfaith Community Services (LICS). They are in particular need for folks to assist at the donation door. They have staff members who would work with them and supervise.

This position entails customer service by greeting community members as they drive up to donate items, assisting them with carrying in their items, possibly giving receipts, and then sorting the items. It is physical work, but they can work around any slight limitations. Lifting is often required and they may also be asked to load items onto a truck.

If you are interested, contact: Kitti Clayton, Volunteer Coordinator, at 803-957-6656 ext: 227.



News Tidbits from the VA

The VA now provides eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery. Interested individuals may submit VA form 10-10007 to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling office by fax at 1-855-840-8299 or mail at PO Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration



The VA and the SS Administration launched a new Health IT initiative that enables the VA to share medical records electronically with SS disability processors. This secure process will save time and money and speed up the process resulting in better service and quicker decisions for Veterans and dependents who apply for SS disability benefits.

The VA has received Hall of Fame recognition by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCR) for achieving an 82% colorectal cancer screening rate, which exceeds the NCCR goal of 80% and the national average, which is in the 60% range.



Veterans receiving care at VA Medical Centers will now be able to schedule routine ear and eye appointments at local VA Audiology and Optometry clinics without a primary care referral – a move that

eliminates multiple steps and gets Veterans into appointments quicker. Before now, Veterans seeking appointments with audiologists or optometrists had to first make an appointment with a primary care physician for a referral for a routine clinic consult visit. The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is expected to be fully operational within all VA Medical Centers by the end of 2016.



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 for VA medical care. 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 disabilities 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 of these forms.

The VA has a 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

Featured Medal:

Merchant Marine Mariner's Medal

The Merchant Marine Mariner's Medal is a decoration of the United States Merchant Marines. Because the Merchant Marines was not considered a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, the Purple Heart was not available to Merchant Mariners; as such, the Mariner's Medal was established by an Act of Congress on May 10, 1943 to solve this dilemma. Awarded only to members of the United States Merchant Marines, the Mariner's Medal recognizes seamen who were killed or wounded as a direct result of conflict against an opposing armed force; in specific, it was awarded to any seaman who while serving on a ship during a war period is wounded, suffers physical injury, or suffers through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of enemy of the United States. In the event any such seaman dies from the wounds or injuries before the award can be made to him, the medal may be presented to the person named in the War Risk Policy as his beneficiary. 6,635 Mariner's Medals were awarded for service in World War II; all further awards of the Mariner's Medal were suspended on June 30, 1956 and has not been awarded in subsequent U.S. theaters of conflict.



Picture of the Merchant Marine Mariner's

Although the Merchant Marine Mariner's Medal is considered a federal service decoration, it may be worn on the uniforms of active duty service members. Designed by Paul Manship, subsequent awards of the medal are represented by 5/16th inch gold stars affixed to both the suspension ribbon and the ribbon bar. The cases supplied with the medal were also used for the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal and the Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal.

On original Second World War issues of the Mariner's Medal, a small triangle separates "United" and "States"; re-issues have a small dot. Also on originals, the designer's initials "P.M." (Paul Manship), are below the wreath, to either side of the cuff; subsequent re-issues of the medal lack these devices.

<p>January is National Blood Donor Month</p> 	<p>February is National American Heart Month</p> 
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Coming in the Next Issue...

Healthcare;
VA caregiver program
&
emergency care in a
non-VA facility.