



# LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

*"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"*

March/April 2018



Lexington, SC.

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**At A Glance Calendar  
March & April**

For a list of events in Lexington County for March & April

See page 12 Happenings Around Lexington County

Weekly on Tuesdays in March

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Friday, March 9th

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

Saturday, March 10th

Dang-it Doll Workshop—for more information, see page 10

Sunday, March 11th

Daylight Savings Time Begins

Tuesday, March 13th

County Council Meeting

Friday, March 16th

Ribbon Cutting and Open House of the New Office Complex—for more information, see page 13

Saturday, March 17th

St. Patrick's Day

Tuesday, March 20th

Spring Begins

Tuesday, March 27th

County Council Meeting

Weekly on Tuesdays in April

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Sunday, April 1st

Easter  
April Fools Day

Tuesday, April 10th

County Council Meeting

Friday, April 13th

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

Saturday, April 14th

Dang-it Doll Workshop—for more information, see page 10

Tuesday, April 23rd

Veterans Resource Fair - for more information, see page 9  
County Council Meeting

Wednesday, April 25th

Administrative Professionals Day

**CALENDAR KEY**

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...*

**At last we are settled into our new office complex in the front of the County Auxiliary Building! It has been over four years in the planning stage and we now have the finest facility to serve Veterans in South Carolina. We are proud of it and hope you will drop by for a visit and tour of the new facility located up front in our building. We have a public entrance and soon will have automatic door openers for our handicapped Veterans and survivors. We will continue to provide top-notch quality service to our Veterans and their survivors but now provide it in a state of the art facility, complete with a conference room and so many other necessary rooms. The County plans a ribbon cutting on Friday, March 16th at 10am. Please come and join us.**

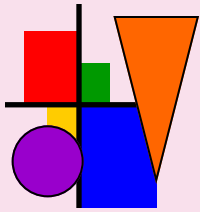
**Baseball season begins soon and we have been notified that the Columbia Fireflies and the Lexington County Blowfish will both be hosting events for Veterans during their prospective baseball seasons. Once we get more information and a flyer, we will ensure it gets sent out and added to our May/June newsletter.**

**We are honored to serve Veterans and their survivors daily and we welcome the opportunity to serve.**

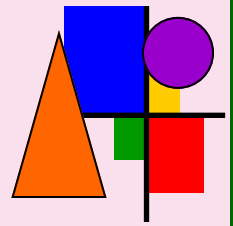
**Enjoying the journey!**



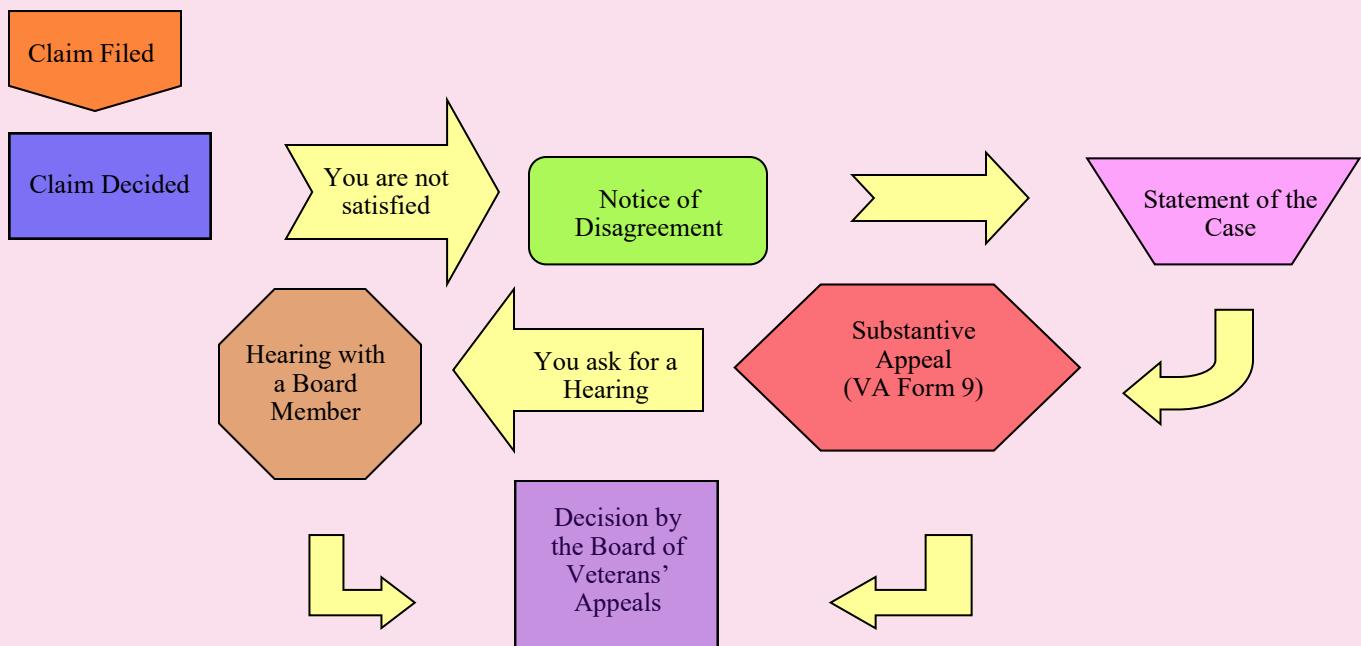
**Daylights Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 11th!**



# *Legacy Appeals Process*



The legacy appeal process is another name for the traditional appeal process or the old appeal 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](http://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

## Legacy 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](http://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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## Legacy 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**

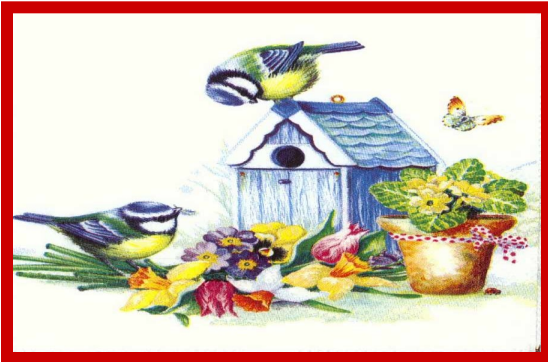
- 1 - Have a representative help you with your claim and appeal. A representative can answer questions and can help make the process move faster. Representatives from Veterans Service Organization have offices in most local VA regional offices or use your local county VA office.
- 2 - Give as much detail 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.



# Administrative Professionals Day



April 25th



MARCH 17th



## Rollout and Application Process for New Veterans ID Card

The VA has announced that the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available for Veterans. Veterans who served in the armed forces, including the reserve components, and who have honorable or general (under honorable conditions) service will be able to apply for the ID card. The VIC will provide proof of military service, and may be accepted by retailers in lieu of the standard DD-214 form to obtain promotional discounts and other services where offered to Veterans. This will provide Veterans with a safer, more convenient and efficient way for Veterans to show proof of service. To request a VIC, Veterans must visit [vets.gov](http://vets.gov) and click on "Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card". This section is located at the bottom left of the website. Veterans who apply, should receive the card within 60 days. There is no need to apply for this card if you are retired from the military or enrolled in VA healthcare. For questions or additional help contact their help desk at 1-855-574-7286, Monday through Friday 8am to 8pm EST.

### Sample of the Veterans Identification Card (VIC)



Front



Back

## March is National Nutrition Month!



## April is National Volunteer Month!

VOLUNTEER



# AGENT ORANGE

Part of the United States' strategy in Vietnam was to conduct a herbicide program to remove foliage providing cover for the enemy. Agent Orange was the most widely used of the herbicide combinations sprayed. Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam were tested or stored elsewhere, including some military bases in the United States.

## When & Where Agent Orange was Sprayed in Vietnam:

The U.S. military herbicide program in South Vietnam took place between 1962 and 1975. Herbicides were sprayed in all four military zones of Vietnam. More than 19 million gallons of various herbicide combinations were used. Agent Orange was the combination the U.S. military used most often.

Heavily sprayed areas included:

- \* Inland forest near the demarcation zone
- \* Inland forests at the junction of the borders of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam
- \* Inland forests north and northwest of Saigon
- \* Mangrove forests on the southernmost peninsula of Vietnam
- \* Mangrove forests along major shipping channels southeast of Saigon

## Eligibility for Disability Compensation:

Veterans may be eligible for disability compensation if they have a service-connected disability and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

## Presumed Exposure Based on Vietnam or Korea Service:

For the purpose of disability compensation, VA presumes that Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides if they served:

- \* In Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 (includes brief visits ashore or service aboard a ship that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam. Check VA's list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that operated in Vietnam.
- \* In or near the Korean demilitarized zone anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971. These Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides to qualify for disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure (also called "presumptive diseases").



## Exposure not Presumed:

A Veteran who believes he or she has a disease caused by herbicide exposure, but it is not a presumptive disease, must show an actual connection between the disease and herbicide exposure during military service. Veterans who do not meet criteria for presumed exposure to Agent Orange may be eligible for service-connection for related disabilities. This includes:

- \* Blue Water Veterans who served on ships off the shore of Vietnam that did not operate on the inland waterways of Vietnam, or who did not set foot in Vietnam.
- \* Veterans who served on or near the perimeters of military bases in Thailand during the Vietnam Era.
- \* Veterans who served where herbicides were tested and stored outside of Vietnam.

They must show that they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service to be eligible for service-connection for presumptive diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. For diseases that are not presumptive, they must show that they were exposed to herbicides and that there is an actual connection between the disease and their herbicide exposure.

**EXCEPTION:** Blue Water Veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the waters offshore of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era.



Continued on page 8

## Agent Orange continued from page 7

### List of Presumptive Diseases:

\* *Acute and Subacute Peripheral Neuropathy*

A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10% disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides and resolve within two years after the date it began.

\* *AL Amyloidosis*

A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs.

\* *Chloracne (or Similar Acneform Disease)*

A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, chloracne (or other acne form disease similar to chloracne) must be at least 10% disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

\* *Chronic B-cell Leukemia's*

A type of cancer which affects white blood cells.

\* *Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)*

A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin.

\* *Hodgkin's Disease*

A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen and by progressive anemia.

\* *Ischemic Heart Disease*

A disease characterized by reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain.

\* *Multiple Myeloma*

A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow.

\* *Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma*

A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue.

\* *Parkinson's Disease*

A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement.

\* *Porphyria Cutanea Tarda*

A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10% disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

\* *Prostate Cancer*

Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men.

\* *Respiratory Cancers*

Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus.

\* *Soft Tissue Sarcoma*

A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood, and lymph vessels, and connective tissues. Does not include: Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma).

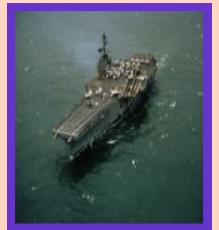
### Agent Orange Registry Health Exam for Veterans:

VA's Agent Orange Registry Health Exam alerts Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to Agent Orange exposure during their military service. The registry data helps the VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively. This comprehensive health exam includes an exposure and medical history, laboratory tests, and a physical exam. A VA health professional will discuss the results face-to-face with the Veteran and in a follow-up letter.

Important points about registry health exams:

- \* Free to eligible Veterans and no co-payment.
- \* Not a disability compensation exam or required for other VA benefits.
- \* Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary.
- \* Based on Veterans' recollection of service, not on their military records.
- \* Will not confirm exposure to Agent Orange.
- \* Veterans can receive additional registry exams, if new problems develop.

To contact the VA about Agent Orange Registry Health Exams: Call your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator at Dorn VAMC: 803-776-4000 ext. 6179; TDD (for hearing impaired): 1-800-829-4833; or go to your nearest VA health care facility and speak to the VA Environmental Health Coordinator.







# Veterans Resource Fair

April 24, 2018  
10am – 2pm

1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia SC, 29201

South Carolina  
Statehouse  
North Lawn



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT  
MR. JAMES C. BROWN  
803-576-1908**



This is an opportunity for Veterans to gather information and interact with all of the invited organizations about issues that are important to them.



**This is a FREE event!  
For All  
South Carolina Veterans!**



## Lexington County Veterans Group



All Honorably Discharged 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.

## Veteran Wives Support Group

**Meets 1st Friday of each month  
2 to 4pm**

**Crossroads Counseling Center  
130A Whiteford Way  
Lexington, SC 29072**

*For further information, please visit their website at [lex-coveteransgroup.com](http://lex-coveteransgroup.com) or contact our office at 803-785-8400.*



## Dang-it Dolls Workshops

Saturday, March 10th and Saturday, April 14th  
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.



**March is  
National  
Celery  
Month!**



**April is  
National  
Straw Hat  
Month!**



**HAPPY  
Easter!**

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

**March 15, 1767** - Andrew Jackson was born in a log cabin in Waxhaw, SC.

**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 in Budapest, Hungary.

**March 24, 1989** - The oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground off Prince William Sound, AK.

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

**April 3, 1860** - The Pony Express service began as the first rider departed Missouri.

**April 4, 1968** - Civil Rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed in Memphis, TN.

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

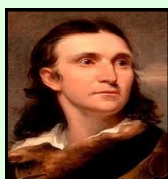
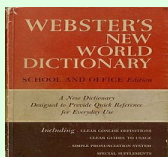
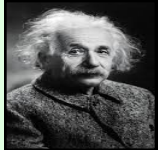
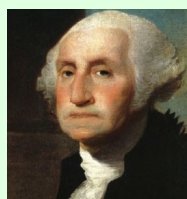
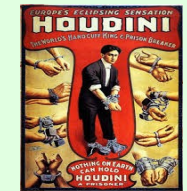
**April 16, 1889** - Film comedian Charlie Chaplin was born in London.

**April 19, 1995** - A massive car-bomb explosion destroyed the entire side of a federal building in Oklahoma City, OK.

**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.



## *Happenings Around Lexington County*

### *During the Months of March & April*

**Saturday, March 10th**

3rd Annual St. Patrick's Parade  
Downtown Lexington @ 2pm  
For more information, visit their website at  
[goblowfishbaseball.com/community](http://goblowfishbaseball.com/community) or call 803-254-3474.



**Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>  
through  
Sunday, April 15<sup>h</sup>**

Midlands Plant & Flower Show  
at the State Farmers Market  
Thursday – Saturday 8am to 6pm  
Sunday 10am to 4pm  
For more information, call 803-737-4664 or email  
[bboozerscda.sc.gov](mailto:bboozerscda.sc.gov).



**Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Gardens  
7 to 9:30pm  
For more information, visit their website at  
[riverbanks.org/events](http://riverbanks.org/events).



## **Lowe's Expands Support Of The Military With Enhanced Discount**



Lowe's Companies, Inc. recently announced it will expand its military discount program by offering 10 percent off personal purchases every day to current and honorably discharged members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The new program uses a MyLowe's card for quick identification, is available both in U.S. stores and on [Lowe's.com](http://Lowe's.com) and offers easy online enrollment. The discount is effective immediately.

"Lowe's was founded by Carl Buchan, an Army Veteran who wanted to make home building and home improvement affordable for returning GIs and their families," said Robert A. Niblock, chairman, president and CEO. "The values and leadership instilled through his military service formed the foundation of our company. Enhancing our discount program honors his memory and the commitment servicemen and women and their families make to our country."

Lowe's has offered discounts to Veterans and military servicemen and women for more than a decade. Current and former servicemen and women can follow these easy steps to enroll in the discount program:

Visit [Lowe's.com/military](http://Lowe's.com/military) and complete a short personal profile. Check the box to receive a free MyLowe's card.

After the one-time enrollment, U.S. military customers can present their MyLowe's card at the store cash register, scan their card at self-checkout or sign in to their account at [Lowe's.com](http://Lowe's.com) and receive the discount. In addition to simple checkout in stores and online shopping, the MyLowe's card offers free parcel shipping for purchases ordered online with no required minimum purchase. For additional details about the discount, visit [Lowe's.com/military](http://Lowe's.com/military).

Come celebrate our  
**GRAND OPENING!**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 16TH**  
**RIBBON CUTTING AT 10AM**  
**OPEN HOUSE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING UNTIL 12 NOON**

*"If everybody is thinking alike,  
then somebody isn't thinking."  
- George S. Patton*



## 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 John Hatchell, Rick Niehe, Mike Gordon, and Rod Pimental. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of January and February.

**THANKS**

You are invited to participate in the WWII Ceremony being conducted by Kershaw County, Post 17 American Legion and the WWII C-47 Club, 82d Abn Division, Inc., on Thursday, March 29, 2018 at 2:30 pm/1430 hours, to Commemorate the First US Army Mass Parachute Drop (75 Anniversary of March 29, 1943 Operation) at the site of the 82d Airborne Division Monument on Highway US 1 between Elgin and Camden (adjacent to US 1 on the Invista Company Property, 643 Hwy US 1, Lugoff SC). This ceremony will commemorate those who participated in the "Jump", all WWII Veterans and Veterans of all Wars/Conflicts.



## The History of the Pony Express



The Pony Express was a mail service delivering messages, newspapers, and mail and was founded by William H. Russell, Alexander Majors, and William B. Waddell. During its 19 months of operation, from April 3, 1860 to October 26, 1861, it reduced the time for messages to travel between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. By utilizing a short route and using mounted riders rather than traditional stagecoaches, they proposed to establish a fast mail service between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, with letters delivered in 10 days, a duration many said was

impossible. The initial price was set at \$5 per ½ ounce (14 g), then \$2.50, and by July 1861 to \$1. During its brief time in operation, the Pony Express delivered approximately 35,000 letters between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California.

The idea of a fast mail route to the Pacific coast was prompted largely by California's newfound prominence and its rapidly growing population. After gold was discovered there in 1848, thousands of prospectors, investors and businessmen made their way to California. The demand for a faster way to get mail and other communications to and from this westernmost state became even greater as the American Civil War approached.

In 1860, there were about 186 Pony Express stations that were about 10 miles apart along the route. The stations and station keepers were essential to the successful, timely and smooth operation of the Pony Express mail system. The route was divided up into five divisions. To maintain the rigid schedule, 157 relay stations were located from 5 to 25 miles apart as the terrain would allow for. At each *swing station*, riders would exchange their tired mounts for fresh ones, while "home stations" provided room and board for the riders between runs. This technique allowed the mail to be whisked across the continent in record time. Each rider rode about 75 miles per day. At each station stop the express rider would change to a fresh horse, taking only the mail pouch called a *mochila* (from the Spanish for pouch or backpack) with him.



The employers stressed the importance of the pouch. They often said that, if it came to be, the horse and rider should perish before the *mochila* did. The *mochila* was thrown over the saddle and held in place by the weight of the rider sitting on it. Each corner had a *cantina*, or pocket. Bundles of mail were placed in these *cantinas*, which were padlocked for safety. The *mochila* could hold 20 pounds of mail along with the 20 pounds of material carried on the horse.

During his route of 80 to 100 miles, a Pony Express rider (who could not weigh over 125lbs) would change horses 8 to 10 times. The horses were ridden at a fast trot, canter or gallop, around 10 to 15 miles per hour and at times they were driven to full gallop at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. Horses of the Pony Express were purchased in Missouri, Iowa, California, and some western U.S. territories. An estimated 400 horses in total were used by the Pony Express to deliver the mail. Horses were selected for swiftness and endurance.



The Pony Express announced its closure on October 26, 1861, two days after the transcontinental telegraph reached Salt Lake City and connected Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California. The Pony Express demonstrated that a unified transcontinental system of communications could be established and operated year-round. When replaced by the telegraph, the Pony Express quickly became romanticized and became part of the lore of the American West. Its reliance on the ability and endurance of individual young, hardy riders and fast horses was seen as evidence of rugged American individualism of the Frontier times.

**The Midlands Chapter of Blue Star Mothers presents**  
*the 9th Annual*



**A Salute to South Carolina Patriots**

**Saturday, May 19, 2018**

**NCO Club Fort Jackson - Columbia**

**5:30pm—Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction**

**6:45pm—Dinner and Program**

**Now is your chance to say thank you to South Carolina's  
Military and Veterans by supporting and attending the  
Midlands Chapter of Blue Star Mothers' Palmetto Patriots' Ball.**

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

# ***SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING PROGRAM***

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



## **WHAT IS A SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING (SAH) GRANT?**

The SAH grant is designed to help disabled Veterans by providing a barrier-free living environment, such as a wheelchair accessible home, that affords Veterans a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy. Veterans and service members with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs, up to the current maximum of \$81,080. The SAH grant is available to certain Veterans and service members who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

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

## **WHAT IS A SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION (SHA) GRANT?**

The SHA grant can be used to increase the mobility of eligible Veteran and service members throughout their residences. Veterans and service members with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to this type of grant, up to the current maximum of \$16,217. The SHA grant is available to certain Veterans and service members who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

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

## **WHAT IS A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ASSISTANCE (TRA) GRANT?**

A temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and service members who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$35,593 and for the SHA grant is \$6,355.

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

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

## **HOW CAN YOU APPLY?**

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





**LET'S ARM FORCES AGAINST INFLUENZA ...**

**GET VACCINATED!!**

**FLU SHOTS ARE  
AVAILABLE!**

**AT ALL DORN PRIMARY CARE CLINICS,  
MEDICAL CLINICS, AND CBOCS**

**Monday-Friday; 8am-4pm**

**WALGREENS IS OFFERING FREE FLU SHOTS  
TO VA PATIENTS WITH VA ID CARD AND A  
PICTURE I.D.**



**GET YOUR FLU SHOT TODAY!**

## ***DID YOU KNOW...***



Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at [lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters](http://lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters).

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.



## **About Our Office**

On March 22, 1945 the SC General Assembly adopted a bill creating a VA office in each of the state's 46 counties. The Lexington County VA Director is appointed by the Lexington County delegation. 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. Our office also provides off-site appointments at three of the County libraries once a month and we can provide home visits on a case by case basis.

**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](http://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov)**

**Website**

## ***Daffodils***

by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not be but gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed'and gazed'but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.



## ***DID YOU KNOW...***

The VA has lifted it's hiring freeze. They are now hiring VSRs and call center employees at VA regional offices and the VAMCs are hiring multiple positions. Please visit [www.va.gov/jobs](http://www.va.gov/jobs) for more information.



There are over 2000 employees at the Dorn VAMC and over 700 employees at the Regional Office.



## News About Discharge Upgrades or Changes

The Department of Defense, through a joint initiative with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is pleased to announce the launch of a web-based tool that will provide customized guidance to Veterans who desire to upgrade or change the conditions of their military discharge. “We are thrilled to have partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs in developing this wonderful and easily-accessible tool,” said Mr. Robert Wilkie, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. “We support our Veterans, whether they served recently or long ago, and we are excited to introduce a tool that will individualize the guidance for those who desire an upgrade or change in their military discharge,” he said.

Over the years, some Veterans have criticized the review process as daunting or difficult to understand. The issuance of supplemental guidance over the past few years, while helpful to many, has the side effect of creating multiple guidance documents that can be confusing to some.

Furthermore, some Veterans suffer from mental health or other conditions that make tasks like these more difficult for them than for others.

This innovative tool simplifies and customizes the guidance. By answering a few short questions, Veterans will know which board they need to go to, what form to fill out, any special guidance applicable to their case, where to send their application, and some helpful tips for appealing their discharge. Any Veterans who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous, or warrants an upgrade are encouraged to use this tool and then apply for review.

This tool can be found on Vets.gov at: <https://www.vets.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions>. The link is also available on Military OneSource (<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>) and each of the review board’s websites (listed below). The link has also been forwarded to a number of Veterans Service Organizations and Military Service Organizations in order to spread the news to as many Veterans as possible.

This initiative was one of many in recent years aimed at improving the review process and guidance available to Veterans who believe they may have been unfairly discharged or received an unfair discharge characterization. The Department issued special guidance in 2011 for Veterans discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” or its predecessor policies. Also, the Department issued guidance related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) in 2014. Most recently, in February 2016, the Department redoubled its efforts to ensure Veterans received the benefit of the latest guidance and statutes of limitations were liberally waived in such cases. Subsequently, in December 2016, the Department launched two internal reviews of its policies and procedures. That review disclosed some gaps and confusion in the previous guidance. In August 2017, the Department issued significant guidance clarifying how review boards will consider cases involving mental health conditions, including PTSD, TBI, sexual assault, or sexual harassment.

For information on a specific board, please contact the board directly or through its website at:

### ***Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records***

Website: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Board-for-Correction-of-Military-Records/>

Phone: 240-612-5379

E-mail: [usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil)

### ***Air Force Discharge Review Board:***

Website: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Separation/Discharge-Review-Board/>

Phone: 240-612-0995

E-mail: [usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrb@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrb@mail.mil)

### ***Army Board for Correction of Military Records:***

Website: <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/>

E-mail: [army.arbainquiry@mail.mil](mailto:army.arbainquiry@mail.mil)

### ***Army Discharge Review Board:***

Website: <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/>

E-mail: [army.arbainquiry@mail.mil](mailto:army.arbainquiry@mail.mil)

### ***Navy Board for Correction of Naval Records:***

Website: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/bcncr/Pages/home.aspx>

Phone: 703-607-6111

E-mail: [BCNR\\_Application@navy.mil](mailto:BCNR_Application@navy.mil)

### ***Navy Discharge Review Board:***

Website: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/CORB/Pages/NDRB/default.aspx>

Phone: 202-685-6600

E-mail: [NDRB@navy.mil](mailto:NDRB@navy.mil)



# Corned Beef and Cabbage Recipe

5 pounds corned beef  
1/2 pound salt pork  
2 bay leaves  
5 carrots  
5 potatoes

3 turnips  
4 parsnips  
4 onions  
1 head cabbage, quartered  
PS - Don't forget the Irish Beer

How to Make Corned Beef and Cabbage:

1. Place corned beef and salt pork into a large kettle, and cover with water.
2. Add salt and bay leaves.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a slow simmer.
4. Simmer for 3 hours, or until corned beef is tender.
5. Peel carrots, potatoes, turnips, parsnips and onions.
6. Cut vegetables into bite-sized pieces.
7. Add vegetables to the kettle, about 1/2 hour before the corned beef is done.
8. If the kettle is large enough, add cabbage at the same time as you add the vegetables.
9. If the kettle is not big enough, you can boil the cabbage separately.



True Irish Lads and Lassies consume Corned Beef and Cabbage all year round. For every Irishman, and those who wish they were Irish, it's a "Must Have" tradition for Saint Patrick's Day.

## 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.*

**There will be no outreach in Chapin or Gaston for March or April.**

## V.A.L.O.R. PROGRAM

Attorney General Alan Wilson has announced a new program to help Veterans, active duty military and members of the Reserves get free legal help. The program is called V.A.L.O.R., which stands for Veterans, Active/Reserve Legal Out Reach.

The SC-VALOR program will coordinate existing legal resources for the military and Veterans and find support and fill-in where gaps exist, as well as minimizing duplication of efforts.

The program will consist of free legal clinics held around the state, starting in January, and a referral line to connect Veterans and members of the military with lawyers who will provide free or heavily-discounted legal help for problems too complex to be handled at the clinics. The legal clinics will be able to handle simple legal issues like writing wills and power of attorney documents. But the most common legal issues the SC-VALOR program will handle will be Service Member Civil Relief Act issues. Those can be landlord/tenant or employment issues that come up when a service member is deployed, or a service member who's not receiving lower interest rates when deployed that are required by law.

Participants may schedule an appointment by contacting Lt. Jennifer Soldano at [Jennifer.soldano@sg.sc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.soldano@sg.sc.gov) or Lt. Andrew Holliday at [Andrew.holliday@sg.sc.gov](mailto:Andrew.holliday@sg.sc.gov).

## ***Featured Medal:***

# ***Global War on Terror Service***

The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal is a military award of the United States military, which was created by Executive Order 13289 on March 12, 2003 by President George W. Bush. The award recognizes those military service members who have performed service in the War on Terror from September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined.

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

The initial authorized operation for the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal was the so called "Airport Security Operation" which occurred between September 27, 2001 and May 31, 2002. Additional operations, for which the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal is authorized, include the active military campaigns of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Future operations are at the discretion of United States component commanders upon approval from the United States Department of Defense.

The medal is a bronze color metal disc 1.25 inches in diameter. The obverse depicts an eagle with spread wings. On the breast of the eagle is a shield of thirteen vertical bars. In the eagle's right claw is an olive branch and in the left claw are three arrows. The eagle is surmounted by a terrestrial globe with the inscription above "WAR ON TERRORISM SERVICE MEDAL." On the reverse is a laurel wreath on a plain field. The medal is suspended from an Old Glory Blue ribbon 1.375 inches wide and consists of stripes of golden yellow, scarlet and white.

Only one award of this medal may be authorized for any individual, therefore, no service stars are prescribed. Although qualifying circumstances would be extremely rare, battle stars may be applicable for personnel who were engaged in actual combat against the enemy involving grave danger of death or serious bodily injury. Only a Combatant Command can initiate a request for a battle star. This request will contain the specific unit(s) or individual(s) engaged in actual combat, the duration for which combat was sustained, and a detailed description of the actions against the enemy.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the approving authority for the specific battle stars. To date (as of 2010) there have been no service or battle stars authorized for the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.



Picture of Global War on Terrorism Medal and Ribbon



***Coming in the Next Issue...***

Aid & Attendance; Burn Pits, Fisher House