



# VET NEWS

July 2003

## PURPLE HEART STAMP ISSUED

On May 30, 2003, the US Postal Service released the Purple Heart stamp to honor those who were wounded or killed in combat. The ceremony marking the issuance of the stamp was held at Mount Vernon, VA, the home of George Washington. Washington initially created the award as the Badge of Military Merit for singularly meritorious action. In 1931, the current design was created.

The stamp, pictured here, is a regular postal issue for 37 cents.

The Purple Heart is the world's oldest military decoration. It is awarded to members of the armed forces of the U.S. who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart estimates that more than 1.5 million Americans have been killed or wounded in combat operations.



## KOREAN WAR MONUMENT STAMP TO BE ISSUED

A stamp, pictured here, depicting the Korean War Monument in Washington, DC will be released on July 27, 2003, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending the Korean War. This is the second stamp recognizing Korean War veterans, the other one being a 22 cent stamp issued in 1985.



## CALENDAR

- July 1 WAC established (1943)  
Air Force Nurse Corps established (1949)
- 2 US Army Air Corps established
- 4 Independence Day
- 25 Korean War ground combat ended (1953)
- 27 Korean War ended, armistice signed (1953)
- 30 Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES)  
established (1942)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 27, 3:00 pm Korean War Commemoration-  
Lexington Monument- Pickens Rish, speaker
- August 15, 12 noon WWII Program, Dorn VA,  
Poat  
Auditorium- Murray Price, speaker
- September 7, 3:00 pm Rally/Welcome Home for Our  
Troops, Wildcat Hollow
- September 20 POW/MIA Recognition Day
- November 9 Veterans Day Program- Virginia Hylton  
Park, Lexington

## GULF WAR ORGANIZATION

A Gulf War veterans organization is being organized by Steve Robinson, a Gulf War I veteran. If you know of anyone interested in starting a local chapter, contact him at 1-800-882-1316, ext. 162.

## OFFICE WEBSITE

The County Veterans Affairs Office website is at <http://www.lex-co.com/VA/veterans-affairs-office.html>. We have our recent newsletters plus general information on line. Links to the VA and other related websites are available as well as sites to download forms for VA claims or records.

## WORLD WAR II PROGRAM

Murray Price of Lexington will be the keynote speaker at the World War II program to be held at the Elizabeth S. Poat Auditorium at Dorn VA Medical Center on Friday, August 15 at 12 noon. Mr. Price was the pilot of a B-24, the "Complete Miss," in the Pacific. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 6 oak leaf clusters and 2 bronze service stars. Everyone is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served following the program.



**Complete Miss on a mission over the Marcus Islands**



## KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE EVENT

July 27 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending the fighting in the Korean War. The United States joined the fighting under the banner of the United Nations (UN) in efforts to protect South Korea from an invasion by the North Koreans and later the Chinese.

During three bloody years of fighting in places like Seoul, Inchon, the Chosin Reservoir, Pusan and along the 38th parallel called Old Baldy, Capital, Pork Chop, T-Bone, and Heartbreak Ridge, the United States suffered 36,934 dead and 103,284 wounded.



**Murray Price at the Gilbert Peach Festival, July 4, 2003**

Negotiations for a truce were held at the village of Panmunjŏm, where an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, establishing a demilitarized zone which still exists.

The Korean War was one of the most destructive of the 20th century with perhaps as many as 4 million Koreans dead throughout the peninsula, two-thirds of them civilians.

To honor the men and women of Lexington County who served in Korea, a ceremony will be held at the Lexington County veterans monument on Sunday, July 27 at 3:00 pm.

Mr. E. Pickens Rish, a US Army Ranger who was awarded the Purple Heart for his actions in Korea, will be the keynote speaker. Members of the Korean Association will perform in native costume.

Lexington veterans who served in Korea from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953 will be presented Korean War Service Lapel Pins by J.D. Owens, Commander, VFW Post 8738. To be eligible, veterans must have performed duties within the territorial limits of Korea, in adjacent waters, or in aerial flight over Korea in combat operations. Eligible veterans are asked to contact Commander Owens at 359-4007 or 865-9600 or the Veterans Affairs Office at 359-8401 prior to July 16 to register for a lapel pin as they are available on a limited basis.

## **BAKER APPOINTED DISTRICT COMMANDER**

Lexington County American Legion Commander and County Veterans Affairs Officer Gary Baker is the new American Legion District 10 Commander replacing Zone 3 Commander Tom Blessinger. Baker will have responsibilities for American Legion Posts in Richland and Lexington Counties



## **RALLY/WELCOME HOME FOR OUR TROOPS**

Mark your calendar for Sunday, September 7. There will be a patriotic celebration to recognize the men and women of Lexington County serving on active duty and those engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Rally will be held at 3:00 pm. at the football stadium, Wildcat Hollow, in Lexington.

A group of people representing the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, VFW Auxiliary, Lexington Woman's Club, Vietnam Veterans of America, Blue Star Mothers and the Lexington Veterans Affairs Office are organizing the event.

Next planning meeting is July 17 at 7:00 pm in the Veterans Affairs Office. Come join the planning effort.

## **COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION**

Military retirees with combat-related disabilities may be entitled to special compensation. This special compensation applies to retirees who have 20 years of service and (1) disabilities because of combat injuries for which they have been awarded the Purple Heart, or (2) been rated at least 60 percent disabled because of armed conflict, hazardous duty, training exercises, or mishaps involving military equipment.

Retirees who fit into these categories must apply to their own branch of service using DD Form 2860, the Application for Combat-Related Special Compensation. Information and a downloadable form



are available at the following website: <http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/crsc.html>.

Forms and information are also available at the Veterans Affairs Office.

## **TWIN CITY NEWS RECOGNIZES VETERANS**

The Twin City News from Batesburg-Leesville has featured a number of World War II veterans and homefront workers, both men and women, in recent issues.

On the homefront, Sara Bruner spent time learning to drive emergency vehicles and being an aircraft spotter. Verl "Nick" Caughman was a welder, "Rosie the Riveter," at a shipyard in Savannah.

Sheldonia Barfield Whitby joined the Army Nurse Corps, making a number of trips by ship between England and New York before being assigned to Germany.

Phyllis E. Janes joined the WAVES and spent her time at the Naval Air Training Base in Pensacola, Florida. Her classmate, Sylvia Cullum Whitney, also joined the WAVES and was assigned to an airfield in Lake City, Florida. Her son recounts a story of her being on a troop train from New York to Lake City.

Clarence Barnes recounts his experiences with the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division in relieving the surrounded men of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division at Bastogne. He was wounded twice during the drive across Europe.

Evelyn Jones Williams spent three years in the WACS at Fort Des Moines, Iowa and Spokane, Washington before her discharge at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Otho Shealy attended gunnery school for the B-29 to fly in the Pacific but the war ended before he could be assigned so he was assigned to the Medical Corps in the Ninth Air Force in Erlangen, Germany.

In a continuing article, William Cato recounts how he landed on Omaha Beach shortly after D-Day as a replacement with the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He fought around St. Lo and across France through the Siegfried Line.

Copies of the articles are at the Veterans Affairs Office.

## **GUNTERS LEAD VFW AND AUXILIARY**



Hugh Gunter just completed a year as Department Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His wife, Linda, is now serving as the State President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. Congratulations to both of them.

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

The Veterans Administration has a large backlog of claims awaiting action. Many of these claims have been taking 4-6 months or even longer to be reviewed and finalized.

The Veterans Administration Regional Office (VARO) has established a triage team to expeditiously handle those claims which are routine or which can be settled quickly due to the evidence presented in the initial claim. Many such claims are being resolved within a few days or weeks.

This system means that a veteran or survivor can receive benefits much quicker than under the prior system. The VARO is working to reduce the average time for claim decisions to less than 100 days.

A veteran with a claim is advised to seek a certified veteran service officer from the county Veterans Affairs Office, State VA office, VARO, or from a veterans organization (American Legion, VFW, VVA, or DAV). These trained professionals can provide advice and expertise in the filing and nomenclature of a claim.

## WAR PERIODS

Some veterans benefits are based upon wartime service. The periods of war service recognized by the Veterans Administration are:

Indian Wars	January 1, 1817 to December 31, 1898
Spanish-American War	April 21, 1898 to July 4, 1902
Mexican Border Period	May 9, 1916 to April 5, 1917
World War I	April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918
World War II	December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946
Korean Conflict	June 27, 1950 to January 31, 1955
Vietnam Era	August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975 (February 28, 1861 for veterans who served in country before August 5, 1964)
Persian Gulf War	August 2, 1990 to a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation

## VETERANS FUND

The Veterans Affairs Office is sponsoring or co-sponsoring several activities: (1) Korean War Commemorative Ceremony, (2) Rally/Welcome Home for Our Troops, (3) Videotaping our veterans, and (4) some in-house decorations. These activities require funding which is not provided in the office budget.

American Legion Post 7 has established a Veterans Fund to receive funds to assist with these projects. Raymond Caughman, Treasurer, has mailed a letter to the veterans organizations in the county asking for their support of this fund. If you

or your organization would like to contribute to this fund, you can contact Raymond Caughman at P.O. Box 421, Lexington, SC 29071, or at 356-3893.



## DD214s

Remember to record your DD214 or discharge papers at the Veterans Affairs Office. It provides security from lost, stolen, or destroyed documents. If you don't have a copy, check with the Veterans Affairs Office to see about the proper means to obtain copies from the Personnel Records Center.



Join us for a ceremony recognizing  
the men and women veterans of  
Lexington County  
who served in the Korean War  
at the  
**50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
SIGNING OF THE ARMISTICE  
ENDING THE KOREAN WAR**

~

July 27, 2003, 3:00 pm  
Lexington Veterans Monument  
Highway 6 and Maiden Lane, Lexington

Keynote Speaker- E. Pickens Rish, US Army Ranger, Recipient of Purple Heart  
Performance by Korean Association of Columbia dancers  
Presentation of Korean War Service Lapel Pins

~

Lexington veterans who served in Korea from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953 will be presented Korean War Service Lapel Pins by J.D. Owens, Commander, VFW Post 8738. To be eligible, veterans must have performed duties within the territorial limits of Korea, in adjacent waters, or in aerial flight over Korea in combat operations. Eligible veterans are asked to contact Commander Owens at 359-4007 or 865-9600 or the Veterans Affairs Office at 359-8401 prior to July 16 to register for a lapel pin as they are available on a limited basis.