

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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# VET NEWS

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## WWII VETERANS ENTITLED TO BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Veterans of World War II who were awarded the Combat Infantry Badge or Combat Medic Badge are entitled to receive the Bronze Star Medal.

The awarding of the Bronze Star Medal was authorized in 1947 to honor the accomplishments of infantrymen and medics who endured the greatest hardships.

General George C. Marshall in a memorandum to President Roosevelt dated February 3, 1944, wrote: "The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their morale of great importance. The award of the Air Medal have had an adverse reaction on the ground troops, particularly the Infantry Riflemen who are now suffering the heaviest losses, air or ground, in the Army, and enduring the greatest hardships." The Air Medal had been adopted two years earlier to raise airmen's morale.

By Executive Order 9419 dated 4 February 1944, President Roosevelt authorized the Bronze Star Medal retroactive to 7 December 1941. The Executive Order was amended by President Kennedy, per Executive Order 11046 dated 24 August 1962, to expand the authorization to include those serving with friendly forces.

As a result of a study conducted in 1947, the policy was implemented that authorized the retroactive award of the Bronze Star Medal to soldiers who had received the Combat Infantryman Badge or the Combat Medical Badge during World War II. The basis for doing this was that the badges were awarded only to soldiers who had borne the hardships which resulted in General Marshall's support of the Bronze Star Medal. Both badges required a recommendation by the commander and a citation in orders.

The award of these Bronze Star Medals is automatic as long as the veteran's discharge papers indicate the award of either the Combat Infantryman's Badge or Combat Medic Badge. The distribution of the medals was never made.



Veterans entitled to the Bronze Star should provide a copy of their discharge papers and complete a SF 180 Form which can be obtained from the Veterans Affairs Office. The completed form and documentation should be mailed to National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to assist veterans in Lexington County. Several veterans need transportation to medical appointments, dialysis, or other appointments.

Also, Lexington County does not have a van to transport veterans to the Dorn VA Medical Center due, primarily, to a lack of drivers.

If you can assist with providing transportation for one day or even half a day a month, please contact the Veterans Affairs Office.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| August 15    | Murray Price, speaker, Dorn VA Medical Center, 12 noon                 |
| September 7  | Rally/Welcome Home for Our Troops, Lexington District Stadium, 3:00 pm |
| September 19 | POW/MIA Recognition Day, Dorn VA Medical Center- invitation only       |

## RALLY/WELCOME HOME FOR OUR TROOPS



Plans are progressing for the September 7 Rally. Attached to this newsletter is a signup sheet for any group which wants to have a marching unit, sponsor a display of military equipment, recruiting information, etc..

Each group is responsible for its own display table; no electrical service will be available. Complete and return the form to the Veterans Affairs Office by August 8<sup>th</sup>.

COL Keith Coln, Commander of the 169<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, will be the keynote speaker. ROTC units from the county high schools will be participating. Veterans and Blue Star and Gold Star Mothers will also be recognized.

This is an excellent opportunity to let our troops know we're thinking of them. Please note the attached flyer for additional ways to support the troops.

## OLDEST VETERANS WANTED

We are still searching for the oldest male and female veterans from Lexington County. If you know of a veteran who is more than 90 years old, please contact the Veterans Affairs Office.



**STAFF OF COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
Pictured are the staff of the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office: Barbara O'Connor, Veterans Affairs Assistant; Gary R. Baker, County Veterans Affairs Officer; and Jean Frick, Assistant County Service Officer.

## KOREAN WAR ARMISTICE ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED

On Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, almost 300 people gathered at American Legion Post #7 in Lexington to observe the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending the fighting in Korea.

E. Pickens Rish, Army Ranger, spoke to the almost 300 people gathered at the American Legion Hut. Rish was severely wounded during the Chinese offensive for which he was awarded the Purple Heart. Rish had just assumed command of the Ranger unit after the company commander was wounded. Four machine gun bullets tore into Rish's abdomen, almost ending his life but definitely ending his military career.



To express the appreciation of the Korean people to the assembled veterans, Anthony Forker, President of the Columbia Korean Association, spoke of the courage and devotion of the young men who fought to preserve Korean democracy. He thanked the men for their efforts in the Forgotten War which saw 13 men from Lexington County give up their lives.

More than 80 veterans were presented certificates and lapel pins by J.D. Owens, Commander of VFW Post 8738, and Deborah Crawford, Auxiliary President. The Columbia Korean Association presented each Korean War veteran with a crossed US/Korean flag pin.

Lexington County Deputy Sheriff Jeff Flanders saluted the veterans with his rendition of God Bless the USA. The Korean Children Folk Dancers performed two Korean dances and joined other Koreans present to sing Arirang, a traditional Korean folk song.

All veterans were recognized during the playing of the service songs. Mi Young Paik, a native of Korea and currently Associate Pastor at Lexington Methodist Church, led the invocation and benediction.



## TROOP CARE PACKAGES

Troops serving overseas can use/have:

- (1) instant drink/coffee mixes/cool aid in packets (sugar already added)
- (2) playing cards (3) travel board games
- (4) paperback books
- (5) pre-packaged crackers and cookies
- (6) individually wrapped hard candy
- (7) baby wipes (8) disposable razors
- (9) sunscreen (10) chapstick
- (11) toothbrushes (12) toothpaste

There will be collection points at the September 7 Rally. Items can also be brought to the Veterans Affairs Office.

Items should be placed in one-gallon size Ziploc storage bags. All items will be checked before distribution. Send nothing that will melt.

## CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

Congress has passed or is considering the following legislation:

- *The FY 2004 VA-HUD Appropriations Act* provides \$27.2 in total budgetary resources for the Veterans Health Administration, a \$1.4 billion increase over last year .
  - This appropriations package includes:
    - \$15.8 billion, funds medical services for veterans with service connected health needs;
    - \$5.1 billion, is for VA's medical administrative costs;
    - \$4 billion for VA medical facilities;
    - \$1.9 billion for medical care for non-service connected veterans;
    - \$408 million for veterans' medical and prosthetic research
- *The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act* (Passed the House May 2003) increases disability compensation rates to veterans with service-connected disabilities as well as dependency and indemnity compensation rates for survivors of certain service-connected disabilities.
- *The Jobs for Veterans Act* (signed November 2002) reformed veterans' job training and placement programs through a new system of incentives and accountability measures aimed at providing more economic security.
- *The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Benefits Improvement Act* (Passed the House June 2003) provides disabled veterans with assistance in starting and growing small business enterprises.
  - The plan also authorizes the use of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits to pay for non-degree, non-credit entrepreneurship courses for eligible veterans at approved institutions.
- *The Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act* (Passed the House April 2003) provides tax-free treatment of death gratuity benefits given to survivors of members of the military.
- *The National Defense Authorization Act of 2004* (Passed in the House May 2003) instructs the Secretary of Defense to review the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) procedures in order to ensure equitable treatment for the survivors of all men and women who served, regardless of circumstances surrounding their death.
  - *The Act* also instructs the Secretary of Defense to establish an outreach program to assist TRICARE beneficiaries in obtaining better access to health care—understanding the specifics of the coverage, obtaining more provider information and gaining more assistance in resolving any difficulties with the program that they may encounter.
- *The Veterans Health Care Cost Recovery Act* (Passed by the House May 2003) provides greater efficiency for Veteran Affairs' (VA) to recover costs associated with expenses for care provided to covered beneficiaries.
- *The Veterans Health Care Improvement Act* (Passed the House July 2003) expands VA health care services by requiring the appointment of chiropractors. (Although VA has previously been directed to develop chiropractic care programs, to date they have failed to appoint a single chiropractor).
  - The plan also extends health care services to Filipino WWII veterans residing in the United States.
- *The National Defense Authorization Act of 2004* (Passed the House May 2003) provides reimbursement lodging expenses for reservists and recalled retirees while serving on active duty.
- *The Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act* (Passed by the House April 2003) exempts military and Foreign Service personnel from the 2 year residence requirement for capital gain exclusions on home sales. This provision allows military families to exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for married couples) of gain from the sale of a home even if they were not able to reside in the home for two of the five years preceding the sale because of a service transfer.
  - The plan also allows members of the armed forces to keep their Homeowners' Assistance Program or "HAP" payments, resulting from military base closures or realignments, tax-free.
- *The Veterans' Memorial Preservation and Recognition Act* (Passed by Senate and House May 2003) creates a new Federal offense for the destruction of any structure, plaque, statue, or other monument on public property commemorating the service of any person(s) in the armed forces.
- *The Service Members' Civil Relief Act* (Passed by the House May 2003) strengthens the rights and protections to military servicemen and women such as new eviction protections, better protections against lapses in life insurance, and expansions to professional liability protections.
- *The National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003* (Passed the House July 2003) directs VA to establish five new national cemeteries to honor our nation's veterans: southeastern Pennsylvania; Birmingham, Alabama; Jacksonville, Florida; Bakersfield, California; and Greenville/Columbia, South Carolina.
- *Resolution Recognizing and Supporting the Goals and Ideals of the Year of the Korean War Veteran* (Passed the House July 2003) declares to the nation and the world that the American people will never forget our veterans or those who served our nation during the Korean War and requests the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the Year of the Korean War Veteran with appropriate ceremonies and activities to thank, honor, and welcome home our Korean War veterans.

## VETERANS FUND

Raymond Caughman is heading up an effort to raise funds for several activities that the Veterans Affairs Office is sponsoring or co-sponsoring: (1) Rally/Welcome Home for Our Troops, (2) A decal for automobiles to be given to all Lexington County veterans "Proud to be a Lexington County Veteran" (3)

Videotaping our veterans, and (4) some in-house decorations. These activities require funding which is not provided in the office budget.

Any individual or organization that wants to contribute to this fund should contact Raymond Caughman at P.O. Box 421, Lexington, SC 29071, or at 356-3893.

### Flag Folding Ceremony

The flag folding ceremony described by the Uniformed Services is a dramatic and uplifting way to honor the flag on special days, like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, and is sometimes used at retirement ceremonies.

Here is a typical sequence of the reading:

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.