

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



**GARY R. BAKER**  
DIRECTOR  
**JEAN FRICK**  
ASST. CSO

TELEPHONE: (803) 359-8400  
FAX: (803) 808-2105

605 WEST MAIN STREET  
SUITE 101  
LEXINGTON, S.C. 29072

# VET NEWS

November 2004



## **GOLDEN CORRAL'S MILITARY APPRECIATION MONDAY**

On Monday night, November 15, 2004 from 5-9PM, all 400+ Golden Corral restaurants in 39 states will honor our military personnel, past and present, for their willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. The restaurants will provide a free "Thank-you" Dinner Buffet.

The offer is based on the honor system, no ID is required; members of the U.S. Reserves and National Guard are included in this special recognition offer.

The closest Golden Corral is 5300 Forest Drive, Columbia, 787-4446.

## **WWII VETERANS PARADE GRAND MARSHALS**

World War II veterans will be honored as Grand Marshals at the Lexington Veterans Day Parade on Sunday, November 14. Two floats will be available for the World War II veterans. Contact the VA Office if you would like to ride on one of the floats.

## **VETERANS TRUST FUND**

Remember the Veterans Trust Fund as you prepare to file your income taxes next year. You can add on a specified amount to your tax bill to assist in veterans projects.

## **VA NURSING HOME- WALTERBORO**

The new State veterans nursing home in Walterboro is scheduled for completion in early 2006.

Applications for the long term care facility are now being accepted. Submit a VA Form 10-10EZ and a copy of your discharge papers (DD-214).

Contact the VA Office for further information.

## **NEW VA MEDICAL CARDS**

The VA is issuing new medical care identification cards which will not contain the Social Security Number of the veteran. This change is to protect the veteran's privacy.

The new cards will be issued during the next year.

## **REGISTRY EXAMS**

Veterans of recent wars should be aware of two registry exams, Agent Orange and Persian Gulf War. Veterans who served in Vietnam or in Korea should register for the Agent Orange exam at the VA Medical Center. Veterans who have served in areas of the Persian Gulf need to register also.

The registries provide information to the veteran of potential health problems and provide a mechanism for the VA to contact affected veterans.

## LEXINGTON VETERANS PARADE

It's still not too late to enter the Lexington Veterans Parade on Sunday, November 14 at 2:30 pm. ROTC units, school bands, honor guards, military units, veterans are all encouraged to come and be recognized.

The parade starts at the Lexington Elementary School and will proceed down North Lake Drive to the Veterans Monument.

## HOMELESS VETERANS

Dorn VA Medical Center has a program for homeless veterans in providing job and living counseling.

Intake is on Mondays and Tuesdays each week at 9:00 am. Homeless veterans are provided assistance in getting a job, and getting back to being productive members.

Patricia Bradford is the Coordinator of Homeless Veterans at Dorn. She can be reached at 776-4000 ext. 7697.

## MEDICARE PREMIUMS INCREASE

Beginning in January 2005, Medicare premiums will increase \$11.60 a month to \$78.20. This increase is part of an increase mandated by formula.

Social Security recipients should also see their benefits increase 2.7 percent, based on the rate of inflation.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### November

- 2 Election Day  
Outreach, Batesburg-Leesville, 8-12
- 6-7 Celebrate Freedom, Camden
- 9 Outreach, Chapin, 9-12
- 10 Veterans Day Program, Dorn, 10 am
- 11 Veterans Day Parade, Columbia, 11 am
- 14 Lexington Veterans Parade, 2:30
- 16 Outreach, Swansea, 8-12
- 25-26 Thanksgiving Day Holiday

#### December

- 5 Pearl Harbor Day Program, Dorn, 12:00 noon
- 24 & 27 Christmas Holidays
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 New Year Holiday

## REAL PROPERTY EXEMPTIONS FOR PERMANENT AND TOTALLY DISABLED VETERANS

### Documentation Required

- Application (PT -401) necessary
- Documentation from Veterans Administration Office that veteran is 100% Totally and Permanently disabled due to a service-connected disability with effective date of 100% Totally and Permanently service connected or documentation from Veteran's Administration Office that serviceman was killed in action and date of death
  - Copy of deed to veteran or serviceman killed in action killed in line of duty or copy of deed of distribution to the widow
  - Copy of the trust agreement
  - Must be legal residence .

### Entitlement

- Surviving spouse is entitled to an exemption so long as she/he does not remarry or move and obtains by devise the fee or a life estate in the dwelling. The statute allows the widow(er) to change residence one time as long as the new dwelling does not have a value greater than one and one-half times the value of the exempt dwelling.
  - The exemption is for up to one acre of land and the residence. No excess acreage or dwellings qualify for an exemption. Exemption for home passes to the surviving spouse as long as she does not remarry.
  - The veteran must be rated by the Veteran Affairs Office or Veterans Administration and not the Department of the Army, Navy, Air Force, etc.

## HOMELESS STANDDOWN

A Homeless Standdown will be held at the Salvation Army on Friday, October 29 from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Veterans will be provided with health and job information, educational opportunities, as well as some food and entertainment.



## **TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

**1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?**

21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

**2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?**

21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1

**3. Why are his gloves wet?**

His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

**4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?**

He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

**5. How often are the guards changed?**

Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

**6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?**

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30." Other Requirements of the Guard: They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.



### **ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.**

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC Evening News, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

## **Lexington South Carolina, October 19, 2004**

The Blue Star Families of South Carolina and the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. have kicked off a drive to send a piece of home to every South Carolina Service Member serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. A statewide effort is underway with the Midlands chapter working with the Upstate and Charleston Area Chapters to reach all of South Carolina's deployed troops to support their efforts and stand beside their willingness to answer their country's call to service.

Blue Star Families has adopted "Operation Palmetto" Operation Palmetto is an effort to send a South Carolina care package to each service member from South Carolina. This will be an ongoing project as long as we have service members deployed. However, the group would really like the help of the community as the holidays approach. A list of items, as well as a list of drop off locations can be found at the groups website, [www.bluestarfamilies.com](http://www.bluestarfamilies.com) or call 803.206-6088.

Items need to be collected by November 5<sup>th</sup> to be packaged and shipped in time for the holidays. Working with the Carolina Alumni Association and the Columbia Regional Sports Council we want to climax our Holiday drive at the USC Pep Rally, November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Colonial Center. Blue Star will be on hand to accept your donations or any cash contributions to offset the cost of postage

### **What is a Veteran?**

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye...

Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg - or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity...

Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem...

You can't tell a vet just by looking...

What is a vet, you might ask?

He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Panama, or any other far away land sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.

He is the barroom loudmouth, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel...

She - or he - is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang...

He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL...

He is the drill instructor who has never seen combat - but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Soldiers, Marines, Airman and Sailors. Teaching them to watch each other's backs...

He is the parade riding legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by...

He is the three anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep...

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come...

He is an ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being - a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs...

He - or She - is the one who spent days, months, or years away from their loved ones so that you could live at home safely with yours...

He is the one who missed the birth of his own child, so yours can have hopes, dreams and aspirations...

He is the only light visible during the darkest hours...

He is a soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known...

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say "Thank You." That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU".

-Unknown

## S767 SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

Governor Mark Sanford signed into state law S767 which establishes the South Carolina Military Family Relief Fund to award grants to military families. The grants must be in the form of three types of payments: (1) payments based on the need of the member or the member's, (2) payments based on the member's status as a member of the South Carolina National Guard or other Reserve component, or (3) payments to the member's next of kin. Donations to the SC Military Family Relief Fund are made by checkoff on an income tax return.



### Vietnam Veterans of America Legislative Update - October 13

The House and Senate have adjourned in recess until Tuesday, November 16. Below is a brief update on bills that were sent to the President for signature prior to their recess. To view these bills or other veteran's related legislation please use the VVA Legislative Action Center at [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) (click on government relations) or go to [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov).

**Public Law No: 108-309** authorizing continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005 until November 20, was signed by the President on September 30.

**H.R. 4175**, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004 introduced by Rep. Christopher Smith-NJ was sent to the President on October 8.

**H.R. 4200**, the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act of 2005, both houses agreed upon the conference report language and the bill was sent to the President on October 9. Below are some highlights of the 995 page bill.

Eliminating the Reduction in Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Annuities. Authorized eliminating the Social Security offset under the SBP by increasing the annuities paid to survivors of military retirees who are 62 or older from 35 percent of retired pay to the percentages indicated below:

- (1) For months after September 2005 and before April 2006: 40 percent
- (2) For months after March 2006 and before April 2007: 45 percent

(3) For months after March 2007 and before April 2008: 50 percent

(4) For months after March 2008: 55 percent

Concurrent Receipt Phase-in Improvements. Disabled retirees, who are rated as 100% disabled, from the 10-year phase-in period. These retirees are authorized for full concurrent receipt effective January 2005.

Improving Prosecution of Sexual Offenses in the Military. Requires the Secretary of Defense to review both the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and Manual for Courts Martial and provide proposed changes in both regarding how sexual offenses are addressed. The Secretary will propose changes to more closely conform the Code and the Manual to the federal criminal code dealing with sexual offenses.

Preventing Sexual Assaults in the Military. Authorized expanding the mission of the Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies. The expanded task force, under its new name, the "Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services," would examine sexual assaults in the military and report to Congress within 12 months of its initial meeting on its findings and recommendations. Within 90 days of receiving the task force report, the Secretary of Defense would be required to provide the report and his evaluation to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Staffing the Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). DPMO performs a critical range of missions for the nation and the missing personnel of past and future wars. DOD does not appear committed to fully supporting DPMO with even the minimum level of manpower and funding mandated by law.

Medical and Dental Readiness. Direct the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the military departments have systematic processes for providing appropriate health examinations and assessments and a means for compiling health information. Further, the conferees believe that DOD should hold commanders accountable for enforcing and monitoring medical and dental requirements to ensure medical readiness.

Improvements in Medical Services for Activated Members of the Reserves and Their Families. Making permanent the now temporary eligibility of dependents of reservists to obtain TRICARE health care benefits up to 90 days before the date on which the member's period of active duty is to begin. The conferees also recommend that service members would be allowed to receive the same benefits.

**Deductibles Under the TRICARE Program.** Authorized waiving deductible payments required by TRICARE programs for dependents of reservists who are called to active duty for more than 30 days.

**Health Care Payments for Dependents of Reserve Members.** Recommend shielding dependents of reservists who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days from paying a health care provider any amount above the TRICARE maximum allowable cost.

**Permanent Health Care Benefits After Separation from Active Duty.** Authorized making permanent the authority to provide Transitional Assistance Medical Program benefits to service members and their dependents for up to 180 days following separation from active duty. In addition, the conferees direct the Secretary of Defense to provide physical examinations to all active duty service members prior to separation.

**TRICARE Coverage for Reservists Who Commit to Continued Service.** Authorized TRICARE Standard coverage for reservists and their families who have been activated for more than 30 days since September 11, 2001, in support of a contingency operation and commit to continued service in the Selected Reserves. For every 90 days of consecutive active duty service, the member and their family are eligible for one year of TRICARE coverage while in a non-active duty status.

**Transition to New Resource Sharing Agreements Under TRICARE.** To make certain that the transition to new TRICARE contracts does not disrupt beneficiary health care, the conferees encourage the Secretary of Defense to consider the use of all existing authorities to guarantee a smooth transition, especially as the carved-out resource sharing programs evolve to new contractual agreements. The Secretary should also ensure that the new resource sharing contracts are as cost effective as current agreements, provide for similar staffing flexibility, and provide uninterrupted care for beneficiaries during the transition.

**Payment of Health Benefit Premiums for Mobilized Employees.** Authorized federal employees, who serve in the military reserves and are ordered into active duty and placed on leave without pay, to continue to receive coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program for two years. Further, HR 4200 would authorize both the employee's and agency's share of the premiums to be covered for up to two years.

**Advanced Amputee Treatment Program.** The goal of this program is state-of-the-art treatment focused on research in amputee treatment,

prosthetics, and rehabilitation to ensure that amputee patients receive the kind of care that will allow them to lead lives unconstrained by their amputation. The Army's initiative in establishing the Amputee Patient Care Program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and authorized an increase of \$17.9 million to the President's budget for this program.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) was instrumental in getting the following language in the **H.R. 4200** FY05 Authorization bill.

Sec. 731 Medical Readiness Plan And Joint Medical Readiness Oversight Committee. Authorizes The Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive plan to improve Medical Readiness, and Department of Defense tracking of the health status, of members of the Armed Forces throughout their service in the Armed Forces, and to strengthen medical readiness and tracking before, during, and after deployment of members of the Armed Forces Overseas.

Sec. 732. Medical Readiness Of Reserves. The Comptroller General shall carry out a study of the health of the members of the reserve components of the armed forces who have been called or ordered to active duty for a period of more than 30 days in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Comptroller General shall commence the study not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this act.

Sec. 733. Baseline Health Data Collection Program to collect baseline health data from each person entering the armed forces, at the time of entry into the armed forces

Sec. 734. Medical Care And Tracking And Health Surveillance In The Theater Of Operations. Authorizes the Secretary of Defense to prescribe a policy that requires the records of all medical care provided to a member of the Armed Forces in a theater of operations to be maintained as part of a complete health record for the member.

Sec. 738. Full Implementation Of Medical Readiness Tracking And Health Surveillance Program And Force Health Protection And Readiness Program. The Secretary of Defense, in conjunction with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps fully implement at all levels (1) the Medical Readiness Tracking and Health Surveillance Program under this title and the amendments made by this title; and (2) the Force Health Protection and Readiness Program of the Department of Defense (relating to the prevention of

injury and illness and the reduction of disease and noncombat injury threats).

## VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

A number of veterans organizations meet in Lexington County or nearby counties. Each organization has membership requirements. Please check with the Commander for any changes to this listing for meeting times and locations. Please inform the VA Office if there are any changes so they can be made to the mailing list and for this listing.

### THE AMERICAN LEGION

Commander John Testruth  
Lexington Post #7  
PO Box 544  
Lexington, SC 29071  
(803) 957-5620

Commander: Charles M. Nichols  
Batesburg-Leesville Post #61  
147 Tin Branch Court  
Leesville, SC 29070  
(803) 532-9401

Commander: Douglas H. Reeves  
West Columbia Post #79  
1631 Batchelor St.  
West Columbia, SC 29169  
(803) 796-4967

Commander: John Matthews  
Congaree Post #90  
2715 Bensmin Drive  
West Columbia, SC 29170  
(803) 796-7824

Commander: David Griffith  
Cayce Post #130  
3963 Brutus Pass  
West Columbia, SC 29170  
(803) 359-1278

Commander: Kenneth A. Amick  
Gilbert Post #142  
2755 Old Charleston Road  
Gilbert, SC 29054  
(803) 892-5113

Commander: John G. Kaigler  
Post #156  
1647 Old State Road  
Gaston, SC 29053  
(803) 796-1351

Commander: Bob Swindler  
Irmo Am. Legion Post #174  
127 Elberta Drive  
Lexington, SC 29073  
(803) 356-2843

Commander: John Rowley  
Chapin Post #193  
305 Milmont Shores Road  
Chapin, SC 29036  
(803) 932-9972

Commander: Joe C. Watson  
Lexington Post #217  
P.O. Box 624  
Lexington, SC 29072

**AMVETS**

Margaret Glenn  
AMVETS Post SC-0002  
1778 D Avenue  
West Columbia, SC 29169-5643  
(803) 739-2051

**CHINA-BURMA-INDIA VETERANS ASSN, INC**

Mr. Jim Sheola  
125 Traylor's Gate Circle  
Irmo, SC 29063  
(803) 781-2590

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

Commander: James M. Hawkins  
Woodrow Wilson Chapter 4  
Disabled American Veterans  
145 Cool Stream Drive  
Columbia, SC 29223  
(803) 786-0239

Commander: Albert S. Abdelnor, Sr.  
John W. Crews, Jr. Chapter 13  
Disabled American Veterans  
4723 Arcadia Road  
Columbia, SC 29206-1338  
(803) 782-7622

Commander: Sammie Stewart  
92<sup>nd</sup> Buffalo Chapter 20  
Disabled American Veterans  
205 Weldwood Court  
Columbia, SC 29223  
(803) 786-1285

Commander: Benjamin F. Miner, Jr.  
Clayton Durham Chapter 28  
Disabled American Veterans  
420 Greenwood Road  
West Columbia, SC 29169-5315  
(803) 796-4474

Commander: Wilson Hartley  
D&D Whitman Chapter 51  
Disabled American Veterans  
139 Bentwood Road  
Leesville, SC 29070



(803) 532-0886

**MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART**

Stanley Thornburgh  
425 Kitti Wake Drive  
West Columbia, SC 29170  
(803) 957-1469

**MILITARY ORDER OF WORLD WARS**

Columbia(036) Commander:  
MG George W. Goldsmith  
112 Wiltshire Way  
Columbia, SC 29229  
(803) 865-0566

**PALMETTO CHAPTER EX-PRISONERS OF WAR**

Commander: Lawrence King  
207 Quincannon Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3258  
(803) 798-0265

**PALMETTO MARINES Detachment 829**

John Hopkins  
P.O. Box 3933  
West Columbia, SC 29172  
(803) 419-8551

**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA**

National Service Officer: Ms. Tammie Lattrell  
VA Regional Office  
1801 Assembly St  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 255-4307/4308

**PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR ASSOCIATION**

President: Mr. Tom Ryan  
187 Shady Acres Dr  
Chapin, SC 29036  
(803) 345-9908

**SCX2 (Seabees)**

Paul Wandover  
179 Lynn Street  
West Columbia, SC 29172  
(803) 755-7792

**TREA(Chapter 38-SC)**

Mr. Jim Rogers  
PO Box 24524  
Columbia, SC 29224  
(803) 736-1438

**TROA**

SC Council of Chapters:  
President: CPT William R. Babineau, USCGR(Ret)  
400 Lakeside Drive  
Aiken, SC 29803  
(803) 642-5028

## **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**

Commander: Melvin Pralour

VFW Post # 3695

216 Robin Wood Drive

Lexington, SC 29073

Commander Wendell Goff

VFW Post # 6740

950 Rock N Creek Rd.

Leesville, SC 29070

(803) 532-6740

Commander James St. Clair

VFW Post # 6829

1234 Mack Street

Gaston, SC 29053

(803) 794-0645

Commander Dale Eargle

VFW Post #8069

2209 Freshly Mill Rd.

Irmo, SC 29063

Commander Jerry Steele

VFW Post #8738

PO Box 206

Lexington, SC 29071

(803) 359-3313

Commander Clarence Koon

VFW Post # 9037

123 Ann Court

Pelion, SC 29123

(803) 894-3671

## **VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, Chapter 303**

President: Frank Weick

P.O. Box 2001

Columbia, SC 29202

(803) 788-9498