

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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VET NEWS

OCTOBER 2005

LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS' PARADE

COME HELP HONOR OUR VETERANS!

Grand Marshals:

Veterans of World War II and Vietnam

Sponsored by Lexington County Employee Committee, American Legion Post 7, VFW Post 8738, Lexington County Womans Club, Town of Lexington, and Lexington County Chronicle, Sunday, November 6, 2005, North Lake Drive and South Lake Drive; the parade begins at 2:30 p.m. No entry fee. For more information see the application form on the inside cover.



WWII AND VIETNAM WAR RECOGNITION

Lexington County will be recognizing its veteran sons and daughters who participated in WWII and Vietnam. A program is being planned for November 13th, 2005, at White Knoll High School at 3:00 p.m. Veterans of both wars will receive individual recognition.

Veterans who served during these two war periods should contact the VA office or their veterans organization to be put on the list for recognition. Further details for the program will be forthcoming.

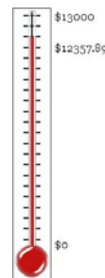


LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS' VAN

Donations to the Veterans' Van Fund are growing but we need everyone's help to make this goal a reality. Due to an increase in the cost, DAV has informed us the price of the van will be approximately \$13,000. The vans are titled to the VA Medical Center which then accepts responsibility for maintenance, fuel, and insurance.

The Advisory Committee has asked each veteran's organization in Lexington County to contribute \$500 or more to the program. Personal donations also can be made. Donations can be made to the Lexington County Veterans Van Fund, 605 West Main Street, Lexington, SC 29072.

The Veterans' Van Fund would like to thank the Lexington County Council for contributing \$5,000 toward this worthy cause.



The thermometer graph shows the current status of funds collected, \$12,357.89.

VFW Post #8738, 424 Cedarcrest Drive, Lexington, SC will hold a Flag Retirement Service on October 1, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. You may drop your flags off at the Post or put in the flag disposal drop box (old blue U.S. mailbox) located near the flagpole.

FUTURE DORN PROGRAMS

Veterans Day – November 10, 10:00 a.m.

Pearl Harbor Day – December 2, 12 noon

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

Senate Resolution 155, introduced by Sen. Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.), designated November 6-12 as *National Veterans Awareness Week*. This special week is designed to serve as the focus for educating schoolchildren about the contributions and sacrifices of America's war veterans.

It also encourages veterans to enter the classroom and work with students and teachers. The resolution's introduction says the week is "to point out the need to *develop educational programs* [emphasis added] regarding the contributions of veterans to the country."

Noting the sharp decline in the number of American families that have a personal connection to the armed forces since the advent of the all-volunteer military, the resolution is clear in its intent.

A key statement reads that it is "essential that the future leaders of the nation understand the *history of military action* [emphasis added] and the contributions and sacrifices of those who conduct such actions." (*VFW*, September, 2005).

HELPING VETERANS FIND JOBS

Veterans interested in obtaining job help from the federal government should familiarize themselves with VETS—the Veterans Employment and Training Service. VETS is a Labor Department agency headed by an assistant secretary and was created nearly 25 years ago with a specific mission; help veterans find jobs.

One-Stop Career Centers are located in state employment offices, but the *Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002* (*Public Law 107-288*) mandates that veterans have priority of service.

Veterans may access the Veterans Employment and Training Service Web site at:

www.dol.gov/vets.

Veterans can obtain job assistance through any state employment office. To find the nearest office, call 1-877-US2-JOBS or visit the Web site:

www.HireVetsFirst.gov

To visit a One-Stop Career Center online, access www.careeronestop.org.

To inquire about the National Veterans Training Institute, which trains Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives, access:

www.nvti.cudenver.edu.

To contact the nearest VETS representative, call the South Carolina Employment Security Commission at the Lexington Job Service, 714 South Lake Drive: 359-6131.

DIABETES HIGHER AMONG VIETNAM AIRMEN

A 20-year Pentagon study of U.S. airmen exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War found that they have a higher risk of diabetes. Airmen who served on ground crews had the highest average traces of dioxin, which is found in the herbicide, and showed a 166% increase in diabetes requiring insulin control.

The 2002 Ranch Hand Study, named after the operation that sprayed Agent Orange to kill foliage in Vietnam between 1962-71, examined 1,951 Air Force vets who served in Vietnam. Its findings supported earlier studies in 1992 and 1997. The National Academy of Science and the VA secretary will review the study.

Other findings included an increase in the frequency of reported acne and elevated blood lipids that tended to increase with dioxin levels. However, no significant increase in the risk of cancer was found. Ranch Hand ground crews, the subgroup with the highest dioxin levels, showed a 14% decreased risk of cancer.

The Pentagon noted three limitations to the study:

- The results cannot be generalized to all Vietnam veterans.
- The size of the study makes it difficult to detect increases in rare diseases.
- Other variables that were not considered in the report could have influenced the results.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE HOME LOAN UPDATE

Members of the Guard and Reserve usually have to serve six years before becoming eligible for a Veterans Administration (VA) home loan, but it's important for those who have been called to active duty to know that they have only a 90-day service requirement to qualify.

Members of the Guard and Reserve discharged after less than 90 days with a service-connected disability are also eligible.

Many of the recently activated Guard members and Reservists are unaware that they qualify for a VA home loan, according to VA officials.

One of the biggest advantages of a VA loan is that borrowers can finance their purchase, up to \$359,650, without making a down payment.

Reservists and Guard members do pay a slightly higher loan fee on a zero-down loan--2.75 percent, compared to 2 percent for active-duty servicemembers. Those percentages can be reduced with 5- or 10-percent down payments and the fees can be included in the loan amount.

There are some other small differences in the basic eligibility requirements between home loans for active-duty and reserve-component troops. Military.com offers a wealth of [information](#) about the VA home loan program and the VA also has more details about loan benefits and other benefits which are organized in a concise, easy-to-follow guide.

There's also a VA toll-free number, 1-888-487-1970, to call with any questions you might have.

The best way for Guard members and Reservists to find out if they qualify for a home loan is to [apply](#) for a certificate of eligibility. Some lenders will handle the application paperwork.

During peacetime, the eligibility requirement for regular active duty personnel is 181 days of continuous active duty with an honorable discharge. Eligibility is also granted to those who are discharged with a service-connected disability with less than 181 days service. Wartime active-duty servicemembers must serve 90 days or less if they have a service-connected disability.

CHAPIN LABOR DAY PARADE



**Gary R. Baker, Lexington County VA
Service Officer and wife, Judy, ride
in the parade**

NEW WEBSITE FOR WAR WIDOWS AND SURVIVORS

A new website for surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died while in the service of their nation has been launched by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It is located at

<http://www.vba.va.gov/Survivors>.

At a committee hearing in February, Tiffany Petty, a 25-year-old mother of two from Idaho, told the committee about the difficulty she had receiving clear information about the benefits and help she and her children could receive, after her husband Jerrick was killed in [Iraq](#). At the same hearing, Jennifer McCollum, a 31-year-old woman from Jacksonville, Florida, told the committee that help from the government agencies "seems to be the exception, rather than the rule." Her son was born several months after her husband was killed in a military plane crash in Pakistan.

According to calculations run by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a surviving spouse and two children of an enlisted servicemember killed while serving in the military could receive over \$600,000 in benefits. The money would break down as follows:

Social Security Death Benefit	
One time payment	\$ 255
Department of Defense Death Gratuity	
One time payment	100,000
Department of Defense Burial Allowance	
One time payment	6,900
Department of Defense Housing Allowance	
One time payment	7,626
VA Burial Allowance	
One time payment	2,000
Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance	
One time payment	400,000
Social Security Survivors Benefits	
Recurring monthly payment	1,773
DoD Survivors Benefit Plan	
Recurring monthly payment	786
VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation	
Recurring monthly payment	1,737
DoD TRICARE Prime (Health Insurance)	
Yearly benefit expressed as cash equivalent	12,000
VA Dependents' Educational Assistance	
Total Assistance Per Family	108,405
Total Possible Benefits	\$641,482

\$1 BILLION AWARDED TO INJURED RETIREES

August 17, 2005. Military.com has learned that the \$1 billion has been awarded to retirees with disabilities across all military uniformed Services through the Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) program. Enacted by Congress in 2002, CRSC is a \$22 billion program that provides tax-free monthly payments to injured retirees from all uniformed services. CRSC payments are retroactive and supplement a retiree's Veteran Affairs (VA) disability pay and Service retired pay.

COL John Sackett, Army CRSC Chief, states "This is a great milestone but we have a long way to go. Retirees with disabilities have more than earned this compensation. Billions of dollars are still available, so we hope that eligible retirees will submit their claims." Out of the \$1 billion awarded across all services to date, the Army has awarded over \$575 million.

Disability Pay Programs- CRSC and CRDP

CRSC is an application-claim based program versus the Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) program, which is an automatic entitlement from DFAS for any Retiree with a combined 50% or higher VA disability rating. Some Retirees believe they are already receiving CRSC when they are actually receiving CRDP and thus do not submit their claim for CRSC. If you are not certain what you are receiving, please check your DFAS pay stub and consider submitting your claim for CRSC.

It is important to note that Retirees cannot receive both CRSC and CRDP and must elect one each year through an annual "program election."

Are you eligible?

Eligible claimants are/ have:

- Retired with 20 yrs Active or Reserve Duty;
- Receiving retired pay;
- Retired pay must be offset by VA payments;
- A 10%+ disability rating; and
- At least one combat-related disability.

Combat-related criteria include those VA rated disabilities that occurred under the following situations:

- In the performance of duty under conditions simulating war (e.g., named exercises, routine field training exercises)
- While engaged in hazardous service (e.g., flight, diving, parachute duty)
- Through an instrumentality of war (e.g. combat vehicles, weapons)
- As a direct result of armed conflict (e.g. Purple Heart)

OR

- Presumptive cases (e.g. Agent Orange, radiation exposure, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Eligible retirees should submit their claim today!

For more information on how to apply for CRSC, please contact the Service that you retired from:

NAVY and MARINE CORPS

1-877-366-2772

ARMY

1-866-281-3254

www.crsc.army.mil

AIR FORCE

1-800-616-3775

www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/disability/CRSC/CRSCnew.htm

COAST GUARD:

Commander (adm-1-CRSC)

U.S. Coast Guard

Personnel Command

4200 Wilson Boulevard

Arlington, VA 22203-1804

NOAA CORPS:

Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

SSMC3/Room 12100

1315 East West Highway

Silver Spring, MD 20910

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE:

United States Public Health Service

Division of Commissioned Personnel

Office of the Director, Room 4A-15

5600 Fishers Lane

Rockville, MD 20857-0001

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) offers employment and training services to eligible veterans through a non-competitive Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program. Under this grant program, funds are allocated to State Workforce Agencies in direct proportion to the number of veterans seeking employment within their state. The grants support two principal staff positions:

- ❖ Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP), and
- ❖ Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER)

This grant provides funds to exclusively serve veterans, other eligible persons, transitioning service members, their spouses and, indirectly, employers. The grant also gives the State the flexibility to determine the most effective and efficient distribution of their staff resources based upon the distinct roles and responsibilities of the two positions.

DVOP and LVER staff provide services to all veterans that Title 38 indicates are eligible for their services, but their efforts are concentrated.

For more information, visit our website at:

www.dol.gov/vets

NEW LAW TO AFFECT SGLI PAYMENTS & PREMIUMS

Defense and Veterans Affairs officials are ironing out details of programs that will expand benefits provided through Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

The \$82 billion supplemental legislation signed into law by President Bush May 11th increases maximum SGLI coverage to \$400,000 and provides payouts of up to \$100,000 for service members with traumatic injuries.

The increased SGLI coverage will take effect Sept. 1, and the so-called "traumatic SGLI" benefit, Dec. 1. Legislation directs that both benefits will be retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001.

Traumatic SGLI benefits will be retroactive for troops who have lost limbs, eyesight or speech or received other traumatic injuries as a direct results of injuries received during Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom. The benefit does not apply to service members suffering from disease.

Troops opting for maximum SGLI coverage--\$400,000 vs. the current \$250,000—will see their monthly premiums increase from \$16.25 to \$26.00. This is based on the rate of 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage.

SGLI coverage is currently available in \$10,000 increments, but as of Sept. 1, the increments will increase to \$50,000.

Because the rates have not changed, service members who retain \$250,000 or less coverage will see no increase in their premiums except for the \$1 "traumatic SGLI" premium.

While these expanded benefits will be provided retroactively, affected service members won't be charged retroactive payments. DoD will absorb that cost.

In a new twist introduced through the supplemental legislation, troops with dependents must get their spouse's approval to purchase less than the full amount of SGLI coverage. In the case of single members, notice will be provided to the designated beneficiary when the member purchases less than the maximum coverage. (*Deployment Quarterly*, Summer, 2005). Visit the website at:

<http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/SGLI/SGLI.htm>

The Gilbert High School Choral Department will present a Patriotic Program in the Gilbert Community Park on Sunday, October 30, 2005. Special recognition of the community's veterans and their families will be made.

If your group would like to participate with this program, contact: Rachel C. Moore, Choral Director, Gilbert High School: rmoore@lexington1.net or 803-891-1126 office or 803-892-1133 fax.



DoD PROVIDES SEVERELY INJURED TROOPS WITH A NEW RESOURCE

Severely injured service members and their families have a new resource to help them put their lives back together after the service member's injury. Service members and their families can call the toll-free number at (888) 774-1361 for information and referrals. That phone number is the 24/7 helpline for the Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center.

When a service member or family members calls the center for the first time he or she is assigned a care manager. That care manager follows the case for as long as they need assistance offering help as needed with case management, hospitalization, financial support, education and employment assistance, information on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, family counseling, local community resources and child care support. The care managers are all registered nurses who have experience working with disability patients.

INCARCERATED VETERANS TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IV-TP), managed by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), is designed to help ex-offender veterans who are at risk of homelessness to re-enter the workforce. The program provides direct services—through a case management approach—to link incarcerated veterans with appropriate employment and life skills support as they transition from a correctional facility into the community.

Services provided through IV-TP may include:

- ◆ Job search activities/counseling
- ◆ Job preparatory training
- ◆ Classroom training
- ◆ Job placement and follow-up services
- ◆

To be eligible, an individual must be a veteran and within 18 months of release from a participating correctional institution of facility. The term "veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable.

For more information, visit: www.dol.gov/vets or contact your local Employment Security Division Office.

MILITARY SUPPORT MINISTRY

Due to Hurricane Katrina last week, we are asking your help in gathering bathroom type supplies. A local reserve unit will load a truck and deliver to the hurricane center.

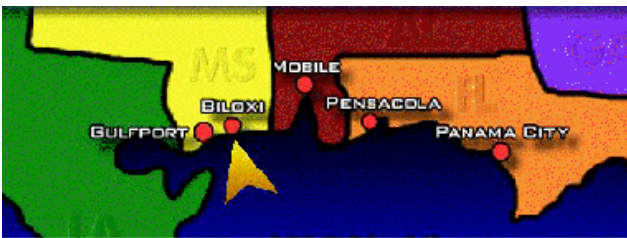
Supplies needed include: toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, or any basic toiletry items.

For more information or to arrange for pick up of supplies, call Janet Parsons at 803-553-0157.

VA HOSPITALS BADLY HIT BY HURRICANE KATRINA

The Veterans Affairs Health Care Administration (VHA), through its Central Office is organizing a relief effort for patients, their families and staff members and their dependents in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Three VA medical centers in the region have been severely damaged. The VA at Gulfport, Mississippi is gone. The New Orleans facility is severely damaged, 170 VA patients are being air lifted out. New Orleans VA Medical Center is surrounded by water.



If your organization is planning to donate to the Hurricane Disaster Relief Fund, please consider making that donation to the VA through the Columbia facility. Please specify if you would like the funds to go to patients and their families or to staff members and their dependents.

Make your check out to Dorn VA Medical Center and on the memo line indicate which group you would like to benefit from the donation. You can mail your check to this office or to Priscilla Creamer, Voluntary Services Officer, Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209-1639. Please share this

information with your church and any other organization that you have affiliations.

SPEEDY WILSON DET 1141 WEST COLUMBIA, SC STARTS INKJET PROGRAM

The Department of South Carolina, Marine Corps League has entered into an agreement with Capital Imaging of Summerville, SC to collect empty inkjet printer cartridges and also sell compatible and remanufactured inkjet cartridges.

Each Detachment will receive a 12% commission and the department will receive a 3% commission on all sales. Place your order on the BuyMarineInk.com website or by calling 1-800-868-6780. Be sure to include your detachment number and identify yourself as part of the Marine Corps League when ordering.

Each detachment can collect empty inkjet cartridges and turn them into Capital Imaging for a \$1.00 credit for every useable cartridge that is returned. Capital Imaging collects HP, Lexmark, Dell and Canon cartridges. They will sort your cartridges for ones that are eligible for credit.

For more details, e-mail Captainink@aol.com



MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

October 22, 2005 is "Make a Difference Day." Pick some worthy cause and have your chapter or post participate. VFW Post 8738 is adopting a Disabled Veteran and his family as their project. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the Post at 424 Cedarcrest Drive, Lexington, SC. Phone: 359-4007.

**2005 COUNTY OF LEXINGTON
VETERANS' DAY PARADE
APPLICATION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2005 AT 2:30
p.m.**

Name of Entry:

Type of Entry:	Marching
Band Beauty Queen	Civic Float
(Please Circle Entry Type)	Marching
Group Dignitary	Business Float

Description of Entry:

(i.e., truck, car, float, tractor trailer – include the length of your entry)

Number Participating:

Entry Contact Person:

Address: _____ City: _____
 _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Additional Information for Your Entry Here:

Mail Applications to:

For More Information Contact:

County of Lexington Veterans' Day

Sharon Willis 803-237-9617*** after 5 pm

Parade Committee

Gary Baker 803-785-8400*

Attn: Sharon Willis, Chairperson

Bob Hall 803-785-8349*

212 South Lake Drive

* Monday – Friday 8-5 p.m.

Lexington, SC 29072

**ENTRY IS FREE! DEADLINE FOR
ENTRIES IS OCTOBER 28, 2005**

*******ALL MARCHING BANDS AND ROTC GROUPS WILL MEET IN THE BUS PARKING LOT OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. PLEASE DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS OF THE BAND AND ROTC IN THE BUS PARKING LOT, ALSO. BANDS AND ROTC GROUPS WILL LINE UP AND ENTER THE PARADE ROUTE:**

LINE UP AT LEXINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 116 AZALEA DRIVE, TURN LEFT ON TO NORTH LAKE DRIVE—CONTINUING DOWN NORTH LAKE DRIVE CROSSING MAIN STREET TO SOUTH LAKE DRIVE. CONTINUE DOWN SOUTH LAKE DRIVE, TURNING LEFT ON FORT STREET, AND ENDING AT LEXINGTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOTS.

The **Women's Army Corps Service Medal** is a decoration of the **United States Army** which was created in 1943 by order of **President Franklin Roosevelt**. The decoration was intended to recognize the contribution of women to the **United States military** during the **Second World War**.

The Women's Army Corps Service Medal is awarded to any service member who was a member of the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps** between July 10, 1942, and August 31, 1943 or the **Women's Army Corps** between September 1, 1943, and September 2, 1945. The medal was issued as a one-time decoration and there are no devices authorized for additional presentations.

The Women's Army Corps



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
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The Veterans Affairs Officer and Veterans Affairs Specialist will be out of the office for specialized training October 5-7, 2005.

OCTOBER OUTREACH PROGRAM

October 4 th	8-12	Batesburg-Leesville
October 11 th	9-12	Chapin
October 18 th	8-12	Swansea

NEW OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Lexington Main Office:	785-8400
From Batesburg-Leesville:	332-8400
From Chapin:	941-0231

These are toll-free calls