

Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County



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VET NEWS

July 2008

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY !!!



FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

July Dates To Remember

July 2nd	U. S. Army Air Corps Established (1926)
July 4th	Independence Day (1776) Lexington County Peach Festival
July 14th	Veterans Advisory Committee 7PM
July 27th	Korean War Ended (1953) National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
July 28th	World War I Began (1914)

THE HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Taken from article by Beverly Hernandez / About.com)

By the middle of the 1700s, the 13 colonies that made up part of England's empire in the New World were finding it difficult to be ruled by a king 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean. They were tired of the taxes imposed upon them. But independence was a gradual and painful process. The colonists could not forget that they were British citizens and that they owed allegiance to King George III.

A "tea party" and a "Massacre" were two events that hurried destiny. Along with general unrest these events united the colonists. In 1767 a tea company in India, owned by England, was losing money. To save the company, England levied a tax on tea sold in the colonies in 1773. Partly as a joke, Samuel Adams and other Bostonians dressed up as Indians and dumped a cargo of the India Company Tea into the Massachusetts Bay. King George III did not think it was funny, nor did he lift the tax on tea. In the Boston harbor, British soldiers were jeered and stoned by colonists who thought the soldiers had been sent to watch them. The soldiers fired into the crowd and killed a few citizens. The colonists exaggerated the number killed and called it a massacre.

ances against the crown which became the first draft of a document that would formally separate the colonies from England. George Washington took command of the Continental Army and began fighting the British in Massachusetts. For the next eight years, colonists fought fervently in the Revolutionary War. In the meantime, a war of words was being waged in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress presented & debated a second draft of the list of grievances, and John Hancock, the president of the Second Continental Congress, was the first to sign. The document, called the Declaration of Independence, was treasonous against the crown and the fifty-six men who signed it were in danger of being executed.

Independence Day is celebrated on July 4 because that is the day when the Continental Congress adopted the final draft of the Declaration of Independence. From July 8, 1776, until the next month, the document was read publicly and people celebrated whenever they heard it. The next year, in Philadelphia, bells rang and ships fired guns, candles and firecrackers were lighted. But the War of Independence dragged on until 1783, and in that year, Independence Day was made an official holiday. 1941 Congress declared 4th of July a federal holiday.

Virginia took the first step toward independence by voting to set up a committee to represent the colonies. This First Continental Congress met in September of 1774. They drew up a list of griev-





Jeannie Wilson poses with a few of the brave men who received girl scout cookies and well wishes as they departed for Iraq and Afghanistan on June 12th.

names of soldiers! If you can help with this, please either email the names and addresses to Debbie at dbmyers@lex-co.com or go to the Blue Star Mothers website at www.bluestarmotherssc.com for more information.



Ann Ricard bids farewell to our fine soldiers as they departed for Iraq on June 12th



WWII Hero and Famed Marine Jack Lucas Dies

Jackson, Miss.—

Jack Lucas, who at age 14 lied his way into military service during World War II, becoming the youngest Marine to receive the Medal of Honor, died June 5, 2008. He was 80 years old.



Jack Lucas was just six days past his 17th birthday in February 1945 when his heroism at Iwo Jima earned him the nation's highest military honor. He used his body to shield three fellow squad members from two grenades and was nearly killed when one exploded. "A couple of grenades rolled into the trench," Lucas told the Associated Press in an interview shortly before he received the medal from President Truman in October 1945. He yelled at his pals to get out and dived at the grenades. Lucas was left with more than 250 pieces of shrapnel in his body and every major organ. After 26 surgeries, he still had grenade fragments speckled on his arms.

He was the youngest serviceman to receive the Medal of Honor in any conflict other than the Civil War.

CAN YOU HELP ???

Do you know of any currently deployed service members who would appreciate receiving a package from home? The Blue Star Mothers regularly mail care packages to those overseas, and they have asked for more

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the **VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE** will be Monday, July 14th at 7:00 P.M.

These meetings are held at our office, located at 605 West Main Street, Lexington, Suite 101. Our office building has a new automatic door lock on the outside entry, so please call our office at **785-8400** if you will be arriving late to the meeting.

SYMBOLISM OF THE POPPY

The red petals stand for the vast outpouring of blood: the yellow and black center, the mud and desolation of all battlefields; the green of the stem is symbolic of the forests, meadows and fields where generations of Americans have perished to make this land free. The stem represents the courage and determination of our fallen warriors. The assembled product, a flower, is a symbol of Resurrection, which is sure to follow. The poppy is more than a symbol— it is a source of hope and aid to many in our nation.





SPOTLIGHT ON OUR VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS

PART ONE OF A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS

ROGER RUCKER: *Mr. Rucker has been a volunteer van driver since the DAV Van was first put into service in Lexington County in June 2006.*

Q: Are you a native of our county?
A: *I am originally from Swansea, SC*

Q: Tell us about your family.
A: *Married to Delores, and have 1 Daughter and 3 Grandchildren [1 Boy and 2 Girls]*

Q: Are you a Veteran?
A: *Yes, served in the Air Force for 26 1/2 years, including service in Vietnam.*

Q: What is your current or former occupation, if retired?
A: *Besides the years of service in the Air Force, I have worked for 14 years in Lexington School District One.*

Q: What are your hobbies and interests?
A: *Avid Fisherman, Hunter and Volunteering*

Q: What would be your most memorable van driving experience?
A: *"Seeing the Office Staff"*

Q: Please share something our readers would be surprised to know about you:
A: *"In my lifetime, I have gone from the rear of a mule to flying a supersonic aircraft"*

Mr. Rucker's birthday is July 23rd.
Please join with us in wishing him a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!!!!

Birthday Greetings also go out this month to another of our fine volunteer Van Drivers, Mr. **Craig Brandt. His birthday is July 6th.**
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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:
*"Volunteers are seldom paid; not because they are worthless, but because they are **PRICELESS!**"*
--author unknown



Favorite Southern Expression?
"All Y'all"

Favorite Historical Quote?
"A friend loveth at all times, but a brother is born for adversity."
Proverbs 17:17

Favorite Military Quote?
"Check Your 6"



***** MORE DRIVERS ARE NEEDED *****

We appreciate the sacrifices made by our current volunteer van drivers, and would like to see more folks step up and lighten their workload. The Lexington County DAV van is transporting an increasing number of veterans to Dorn VA hospital each month, and our drivers are logging over 1,000 miles per month.

Whether **1 day** a week or **1 day** a month, any help would be appreciated. Please call our office at **785-8400** or stop by for an application if you feel you could serve our veterans in this way.

VA DENTAL TREATMENT UPDATE

Outpatient dental benefits are provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs according to law. In some instances, VA may provide extensive dental care, while in other cases treatment may be limited. Veterans are eligible for outpatient dental treatment if they are determined by VA to meet one of the following criteria:



- ◇ Those having a service-connected compensable dental disability or condition are eligible for any needed dental care.
- ◇ Those who were prisoners of war (POWs) and those whose service-connected disabilities have been rated at 100% or who are receiving the 100% rate by reason of individual unemployability are eligible for any needed dental care.
- ◇ Those who are participating in a VA vocational rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 are eligible for dental care necessary to:
 - ⇒ Enter into a rehabilitation program, achieve the goals of the veteran's vocational rehabilitation program; or prevent interruption of a rehabilitation program; or
 - ⇒ Hasten the return to a rehabilitation program of a veteran in interrupted or leave status; or
 - ⇒ Hasten the return to a rehabilitation program of a veteran placed in discontinued status because of illness, injury or a dental condition; or
 - ⇒ Secure and adjust to employment during the period of employment assistance; orTo achieve maximum independence in daily living.
- ◇ Recently discharged veterans with a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability who served on active duty 90 days or more and who apply for VA dental care within 180 days of separation from active duty, effective Jan 28, 2008 may receive one time treatment for dental conditions if the dental condition is shown to have existed at the time of discharge or release and the veteran's certificate of discharge does not indicate that the veteran received necessary dental care within a 90-day period prior to discharge or release. This includes veterans who reentered active military, naval or air service within 90 days after the date of a prior discharge. **Note:** Veterans discharged between August 1st, 2007 and January 28th, 2008, are eligible for the dental benefit by making application within 180 days (formerly 90 days) of their discharge.

Veterans previously denied this one time dental benefit because application was made outside of the previously mandated period will be contacted to review and correct, as appropriate, your application denial. Affected veterans may also contact their local medical center for review.

- ◇ Those having a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability resulting from combat wounds or service trauma are eligible for repeat care for the service-connected condition(s).
- ◇ Those having a dental condition clinically determined by VA to be currently aggravating a service-connected medical condition are eligible for dental care to resolve the problem.
- ◇ Those with nonservice-connected dental conditions or disabilities for which treatment was begun while the veteran was in an inpatient status in a VA medical center, if clinically determined necessary to complete such dental treatment on an outpatient basis.
- ◇ Those receiving outpatient care or scheduled for inpatient care may receive dental care if the dental condition is clinically determined to be complicating a medical condition currently under treatment.
- ◇ Certain veterans enrolled in a VA Homeless Program for 60 consecutive days or more may receive certain medically necessary outpatient dental services.

For more information about eligibility for VA medical and dental benefits, contact the Health Benefits Service Center at (877) 222-8387 or go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility. Note: Veterans awarded a temporary total disability rating by the Veterans Benefits Administration are **not** eligible for comprehensive outpatient dental care. [Source: VA Fact Sheet 164-3 March 2008]

HIGHWAY NAMED IN HONOR OF JOSHUA TORRENCE

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Joshua Louis Torrence was born in Wooster, Ohio on July 26, 1984 and moved with his family to Lexington, South Carolina in 1992; and

WHEREAS, he was the son of Mr. Vernon and Mrs. Regina Torrence of Lexington; and

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Torrence attended White Knoll High School and excelled in athletics, including football and track and field during his high school career; and

WHEREAS, when White Knoll High School opened in August 2000, he played offensive tackle on the school's first junior varsity football team and also participated in track and field, setting some of the schools earliest records; and

WHEREAS, he went on to become an instrumental member of the White Knoll High School Timberwolves varsity football team, where he was a starting offensive lineman; and

WHEREAS, he was well liked and well respected by his fellow players, coaches and other White Knoll students, faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation from White Knoll High School in 2003, he joined the United States Marine Corps and after completing basic training at Parris Island Marine Corps Base in April 2004, he traveled to Camp Pendleton, California and was assigned to an amphibious assault vehicle unit; and

WHEREAS, in September of 2004, Lance Corporal Torrence was shipped to Al-Asad, Iraq for duty in service of his country; and

WHEREAS, shortly after arrival, Joshua and his crew members were transferred to Fallujah, where he served as Lance Corporal with the 2nd Amphibian Assault Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, he received several medals during his service, including awards for serving in the global war on terrorism and the National Defense Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Torrence was a fearless leader who, during his tour in Fallujah, made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of his country when he lost his life while on patrol on March 14, 2005; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2005, the White Knoll High School football stadium field house was named in his honor, forever being known as the "Joshua L. Torrence Memorial Field House"; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to forever recognize Lance Corporal Joshua L. Torrence's heroism and bravery by also having a portion of Platt Springs Road in Lexington County named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, the members of the General Assembly have asked the South Carolina Department Transportation to name the portion of Platt Springs Road in Lexington County from its intersection with South Carolina Highway 6 to its intersection with Kyzer Road the "Lance Corporal Joshua L. Torrence Memorial Highway";

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission, in meeting duly assembled this 14th day of May 2008, that the portion of Platt Springs Road in Lexington County from its intersection with South Carolina Highway 6 to its intersection with Kyzer Road be named the "Lance Corporal Joshua L. Torrence Memorial Highway" and that appropriate markers be placed along this portion of highway with the words "*Lance Corporal Joshua L. Torrence Memorial Highway*".

F. Hugh Atkins, *Chairman Fourth Congressional District*

Daniel H. Isaac, Jr., *First Congressional District*

Henry Taylor, *Second Congressional District*

Charles E. Dalton, *Third Congressional District*

Sarah B. Nuckles, *Fifth Congressional District*

Marvin Stevenson, *Sixth Congressional District*



Vernon and Regina Torrence view the new highway signs now posted on Platt Springs Road in Lexington. The stretch of road has been named in honor of their son, Joshua, who died in Iraq in 2005.

Photo by Erik Campos, [The State Newspaper](#)

New Fort Jackson Army Reserve Center Named in Honor of Lexington Soldier

(information taken from news reports)



Fort Jackson—

A new reserve center in Fort Jackson will preserve the memory of Lexington soldier Specialist Thomas D. Caughman. Caughman, the first member of what was then the 81st Regional Readiness Command to die in Iraq, was killed in June 2004 when his humvee was hit by two rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire in Baghdad. He was 20 years old. His former unit traces its origins back to World War I when the 81st Infantry Division was formed at Camp (now Fort) Jackson. It adopted the nickname “Wildcat” Division from Wildcat Creek which ran through the reservation. Caughman was a member of Company C, 391st Engineer Battalion, but transferred to the 458th Engineer Battalion in Pennsylvania

when that unit was called up for active duty in November 2003.

Specialist Caughman’s humvee was called “The Resurrection” - a tribute to his faith, according to his father, Hampton Caughman. “Thomas possessed a trait unlike any other,” he said. “He was always happy, always smiling, and that came from his inner peace knowing that he was a child God.” Caughman’s grandfather and uncle both served in the Army in World War II. At the time of their service, they posed for a photo in front of a tank. After Thomas’ death, as the family looked more closely at that photo, it became evident that it also bore the name of “The Resurrection”. It was ironic that both vehicles bore the same name. Hamp Caughman believes it is a sign. “That’s God telling us that I’m in control”, Mr. Caughman said. While Thomas is no longer with us, that story will live on at Fort Jackson

In addition to bearing Caughman’s name, the reserve center building will have several other tributes to him. A portrait of Specialist Caughman was unveiled and several display cases are being installed that will house his uniform, some of his medals and other memorabilia. The portrait was painted by a Columbia woman who also lost a son in Iraq.

The unit’s two-story, 80,000 square-foot building is located at 1525 Marion Ave., directly across from the MEPS station. The ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by an open house, was held on June 1st.



Photos by Erik Campos of The State Newspaper

PLEASE NOTE: There will be *no outreach sessions* this month at the Swansea and West Columbia locations. Please call our office at 803-785-8400 if you live in these areas and need assistance.





PLEASE NOTE:
ALL COUNTY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

ON JULY 4TH IN OBSERVANCE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY.



REMINDER: Look for the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Booth at the Lexington County Peach Festival on **July 4th.**



PRESIDENT BUSH PRESENTS MEDAL OF HONOR TO FAMILY OF SOLDIER KILLED IN IRAQ



Washington– On Monday, June 2, 2008, President Bush presented the nation’s highest military award to the family of a 19-year-old soldier who died saving the lives of four comrades in Iraq by jumping on a grenade tossed into their military vehicle. The honored soldier, Army PFC Ross McGinnis, “gave all for his country”, the President said somberly. “No one outside this man’s family can know the true weight of their loss. But in words spoken long ago, we are told how to measure the kind of devotion that Ross McGinnis showed on his last day. ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’”

The award was presented during a ceremony in the East Room, where McGinnis’ parents, Tom and Romaine, and his two sisters Becky and Katie, were present to receive the honor. The four soldiers saved by McGinnis’ actions were also in attendance.



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY
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Lexington, SC 29072
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JULY OUTREACH PROGRAM DATES

July 1st	9-12	Batesburg/Leesville
July 8th	9-12	Chapin

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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