

Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County



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VET NEWS

August 2009

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AUGUST OUTREACH PROGRAM DATES

Aug. 4th 9-12 Batesburg-Leesville
Aug. 11th 9-12 Chapin

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

Please note regarding outreach: Appointments are **greatly** appreciated, and walk-ins will be assisted between appointments. Thank you for helping us better assist you!

WHAT IS ALS ?

- ⇒ **ALS**, also known as **Lou Gehrig's Disease**, is a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people in the United States. It is often relentlessly progressive, and is almost always fatal.
- ⇒ **ALS** causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that lead to muscle weakness, muscle atrophy, and spontaneous muscle activity. Currently, the cause of ALS is unknown, and there is no effective treatment.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

www.federalregister.gov/OFRUUpload/OFRData/2008-21998_PL.pdf

www.va.gov

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Aug. 7th Purple Heart Recognition Day
Aug. 8th Open House—10 AM– 2 PM
American Legion Post 7
Aug. 10th Ladies Support Group– Noon
Aug. 19th National Aviation Day

VA SECRETARY ESTABLISHES ALS AS PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESS

Washington— Veterans with **amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)** may receive badly-needed support for themselves and their families since the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that ALS will become a presumptively compensable illness for all veterans with **90 days or more of continuously active service** in the military.

"Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action," then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Director James B. Peake said .

The former Secretary's decision was based primarily on a November 2006 report by the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine on the association between active-duty service and ALS. "We are extremely grateful to Secretary Peake, Congressman Henry Brown and Senator Lindsey Graham for standing on the side of veterans with ALS across the country," said Gary Leo, president and CEO of The ALS Association... "Thanks to their efforts, no veteran with ALS will ever be left behind," he concluded.

The report analyzed numerous previous studies on the issue and concluded that "there is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between military service and later development of ALS."

"ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly, once it is diagnosed," the Secretary explained. "There simply isn't time to develop the evidence needed to support compensation claims before many veterans become seriously ill. My decision will make those claims much easier to process, and for them and their families to receive the compensation they have earned through their service to our nation."

The new interim final regulation applies to all applications for benefits received by VA on or after September 23, 2008, or that are pending before VA, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit on that date. **For more information on VA's disability compensation program, you may call 1-800-827-1000 or go to www.va.gov.**



VETERANS



Veterans' Widows and Family Members

**Are you getting all the
VA benefits you are
eligible for?**

You may qualify for:

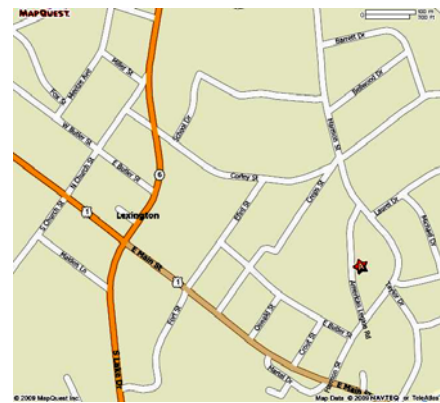
Pension

Service Connected Compensation

Health Care

Nursing Home Services

Counseling



Obtain Discharges (DD-214s) and
Awards and Decorations
Vendors - Veterans - Organizations -
Discuss Benefits

OPEN HOUSE 10 AM - 2 PM

SATURDAY - AUGUST 8TH 2009

American Legion Post - American Legion Drive,
Lexington, SC

DOOR PRIZES - GIVE AWAYS - FOOD

Sponsored by Dorn VA Medical Center, Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office
and American Legion Post 7

Call 803-234-1631 or 785-8401 for more information.

HONOR FLIGHTS CONTINUE

Next scheduled flights:
September 5, 2009
November 7, 2009



www.honorflightssc.com

To apply: Veterans and/or Guardians should either go to the website listed here or call or visit our office to obtain a copy of the application for an upcoming flight.



ARMED FORCES MONUMENT DEDICATED IN BATESBURG-LEESVILLE

[Source: [The State Newspaper](#), July 24, 2009]



Funeral home operator Landis Price's donation to help build an Armed Forces memorial in Batesburg-Leesville is his salute to the sacrifices those in the military make. "This is a thank you for all they've done," he said. Price will be among those at today's celebration of the new plaza, the first memorial of its kind at 68 National Guard armories across South Carolina. The project took shape 15 months ago after community leaders discovered few local monuments honoring soldiers in an area with longstanding reverence for the military. The \$40,000 project was built largely with donations from veterans and their families who live in and near the mostly rural town 40 miles west of Columbia.

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When fund-raising slowed last fall, Price - who isn't a veteran but has two brothers who are - eagerly chipped in to help complete the plaza. "It's showing appreciation to the people in our community and surrounding areas who were and are in the services," he said.

The plaza is at the entrance of the armory in the center of the town of 6,000 residents. It features markers with the emblems of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and reservists. Supporters hope it becomes a model other communities emulate, as well as a gathering spot on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and similar commemorations.

"This monument is a testament to this community's patriotism and will hopefully serve for many years as a reminder to all of us of their sacrifice and service," Guard Staff Sgt. Trey Anthony said. He is among Guard members who oversaw the project. "We've been too busy to appreciate it," Anthony said. "I'm sure that, in time when we reflect, we'll have a good feeling about all the work that made it happen."

Editor's note: **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT !**

Bricks may be purchased for **\$100** each. Application forms may be obtained at the National Guard Armory—206 Armory St., Batesburg, SC 29006, or by calling 803-532-2847. Requests for applications may also be made by email:

michael.trey.anthony@us.army.mil or **jason.osment@us.army.mil**



2009 Lexington County Veteran's Parade Application

Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.

*** PARADE ROUTE HAS CHANGED PLEASE NOTE ***

ENTRY IS FREE! DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS OCTOBER 30, 2009

***** ALL MARCHING BANDS AND ROTC GROUPS WILL MEET IN THE PARKING LOTS OF BUSINESSES THAT ARE CLOSED ON SUNDAY IN THE BUTLER STREET AND MAIN STREET AREA. PLEASE USE CAUTION. PLEASE DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS AND YOU CAN PARK AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT FOR PICK UP. PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE UP SPACES AT MCDONALD'S FOR PARKING. THANKS,

PARADE ROUTE: WILL LINE UP ON WEST BUTLER STREET AND HAYGOOD STREET, ENTER MAIN STREET TAKE A LEFT, GO DOWN MAIN STREET, TURN RIGHT ON SOUTH LAKE DRIVE AND THEN LEFT, ENDING AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT.

Name of Entry: _____

Description of Entry: _____
(i.e., truck, car, float, tractor trailer - include the length of your entry)

Number Participating: _____

Additional Comments: _____

Entry Contact Person: _____

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

Telephone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Mail Applications To:
Lexington County Veteran's
Parade Committee
Attn: Sharon Willis, Chairperson
212 South Lake Drive Ste 302
Lexington SC 29072

For More Information Contact:
Sharon Willis 785-1454
Cell # 803-237-9617
Fax # 803-785-8300 or call the
Veterans Affairs Office 803-785-8400

***** Applications can be emailed to you also. Contact Sharon at sjswillis57@yahoo.com

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO HELP PUT OUT THE PARADE STAKES BEFORE THE PARADE AND TO HELP WITH THE BAND & ROTC GROUPS, MAKING SURE THEY ENTER THE PARADE ROUTE AT THEIR APPROPRIATE PLACES. THANK YOU AGAIN AND ALL THE VETERANS THANK YOU.

State of South Carolina

Governor's Proclamation

- WHEREAS, created by General George Washington in 1782, the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit is the oldest military decoration in the United States in present use; and
- WHEREAS, the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit recognizes the outstanding valor and fidelity of members of the United States Armed Forces who have been wounded by an enemy while fighting bravely to preserve and protect our nation's most cherished freedoms; and
- WHEREAS, as a congressionally-chartered national service veterans organization, the Military Order of the Purple Heart is committed to funding veterans services, welfare, rehabilitation, and educational programs while upholding the proud legacy of courage and honor exhibited by combat-wounded veterans; and
- WHEREAS, in special recognition of the lasting debt of gratitude we owe the brave men and women who have risked their lives to protect our way of life, the Military Order of the Purple Heart annually distributes simulated versions of its official flower, the Purple Heart Viola, that are assembled by disabled and needy veterans in an effort to raise funds for veterans services.
- NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Sanford, Governor of the Great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim August 7, 2009, as

PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to pay tribute to combat-wounded veterans across the Palmetto State and the nation for their selfless contributions in defense of freedom and democracy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DORN VA READIES 10-BED HOSPICE

The Veterans Administration is opening a new 10-bed hospice unit at its center in Columbia. Officials at the WJB Dorn VA Medical Center held an open house on July 29th. They said the units will be ready for patients within days.

The unit has medical and professional staff trained to deal with end-of-life issues, particularly for veterans who suffered injuries or trauma while serving in the military. The new unit also has space for family members to be with their loved ones. It also allows families and friends to bring small items or memorabilia to help comfort the veterans.

[source: [The State Newspaper](#), July 30, 2009]

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Experience teaches us that it is much easier to prevent an enemy from posting themselves than it is to dislodge them after they have gotten possession."

George Washington

DEFENSE SECRETARY ANNOUNCES ARMY TO ADD 22,000 TROOPS

Source: The State Newspaper, July 21, 2009

Washington– (AP) Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced that the size of the Army is being increased temporarily by **22,000** soldiers to help meet the needs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other missions around the world.

This is the second time since 2007 that the military has determined it doesn't have a large enough force. Gates had already increased the size of the Army and Marine Corps shortly after taking the Pentagon job.

Gates noted that while progress in Iraq will lead to a reduction in the number of troops there, more troops are needed in Afghanistan because of the worsening violence in that conflict.

He said the persistent pace of operations in the two wars over several years has meant a steady increase in the number of troops who are wounded, stressed or otherwise unable to deploy with their units. Also causing a shortage is the decision earlier this year to stop the unpopular practice of keeping troops beyond their enlistment dates, a practice known as "stop-loss." "The cumulative affect of these factors is that the Army faces a period where its ability to continue to deploy combat units (with enough troops) is at risk," Gates said.

"This is a temporary challenge that will peak in the coming year and abate over the course of the next three years," Gates told a Pentagon press conference.

The Army currently has a total troop strength of **547,000**. Gates said that he would not seek additional money for the extra troops in the 2009 and 2010 fiscal year budgets. "This decision will result in additional tough choices for the department," he said.

"I'm convinced that this is an important and necessary step to ensure that we continue to properly support the needs of our commanders in the field while providing relief for our current force and their families," he continued.

Gates also said it was "not inevitable" that more U.S. troops would be needed in Afghanistan beyond the **68,000** American force expected to be there by the end of the year. He had said (previously) that there may be some increase, but not a lot."

VA ASSISTANT SECRETARY RAISES AWARENESS OF POST-9/11 GI BILL

Washington– (July 1, 2009) L. Tammy Duckworth, the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, recently visited Vermont to meet with veterans, promoting the Post-9/11 GI Bill. "The Post-9/11 GI Bill throws open the doors of the country's colleges and universities to veterans," Duckworth said. "The Department of Veterans Affairs is working with those educational institutions to help veterans improve their lives through education."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, passed by Congress last year, is the most extensive educational assistance program authorized since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. For more information on what or who qualifies for this benefit, go to the website www.va.gov and click on the link for the GI BILL.

"WE HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE"