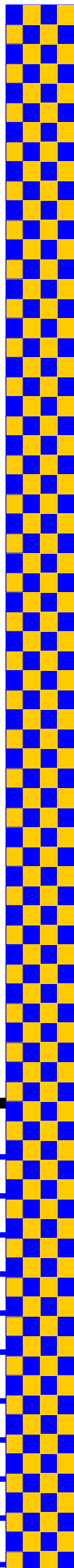




LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

September/October 2015



Lexington, SC.

YOUR VA OFFICE STAFF

ED LUNDEEN

ELUNDEEN@LEX-CO.COM
DIRECTOR

JENNIFER HENDRIX

JHENDRIX@LEX-CO.COM
VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPERVISOR/
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

KATHY DEBERRY

KDEBERRY@LEX-CO.COM
VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS COUNSELOR

JENNIFER PARLER

JPARLER@LEX-CO.COM
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

OFFICE EMAIL ADDRESS

VETERANSAFFAIRS@LEX-CO.COM

605 WEST MAIN STREET
SUITE 101

LEXINGTON, S.C. 29072

8am to 5pm

Monday through Friday

TELEPHONE: (803) 785-8400

FAX: (803) 785-0115

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

At-a-Glance Calendar/From the Director	2
Disability Compensation	3
VA Automobile Allowance	6
The History of Johnny Appleseed	7
On This Day in History...	9
Camp Lejeune Updates	10
Military Service and Social Security Benefits	12
Happenings Around Lexington County	13
Lexington County Veterans Parade Application	16
Featured Medal	20

TOLL-FREE

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



At A Glance Calendar September/October

<p>Weekly on Tuesdays in September</p> <p>Thursday, September 3rd</p> <p>Friday, September 4th</p> <p>Monday, September 7th</p> <p>Friday, September 11th</p> <p>Saturday, September 12th</p> <p>Tuesday, September 22nd</p> <p>Wednesday, September 23rd</p> <p>Weekly on Tuesdays in October</p> <p>Thursday, October 1st</p> <p>Friday, October 2nd</p> <p>Tuesday, October 6th thru Friday, October 9th</p> <p>Saturday, October 10th</p> <p>Tuesday, October 13th</p> <p>Tuesday, October 27th</p> <p>Saturday, October 31st</p>	<p>Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon</p> <p>Gaston Outreach</p> <p>Chapin Outreach</p> <p>Labor Day County Offices Closed</p> <p>Patriot Day VAMC Mental Health Summit</p> <p>Dang-it Dolls Workshop in Cayce</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>Autumn Begins</p> <p>Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting @ 12 noon</p> <p>Gaston Outreach</p> <p>Chapin Outreach</p> <p>SCACVAO Conference in Myrtle Beach</p> <p>Dang-it Doll Workshop in Cayce</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>County Council Meeting</p> <p>Halloween</p>
---	--

<p>Purple—Holidays/Special Days</p> <p>Blue—Outreach dates</p> <p>Red—County Offices Closed, No van scheduled and Special Notices</p> <p>Black—Director's appearances in the County</p>	<p>Brown—County Council Meetings</p> <p>Pink—Special Events throughout the County</p> <p>Orange—Director Out of Office</p> <p>Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings</p>
---	--

**September is...
Suicide Prevention Month**



**October is...
Breast Cancer Awareness Month**



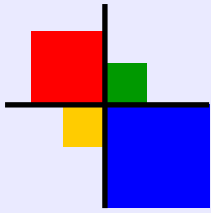
From the Director...

As fall approaches and school begins a new year, let us be mindful and in prayer for our students, teachers and administrators. With fall comes football and soccer and we want our children to be safe, play with heart and play fairly.

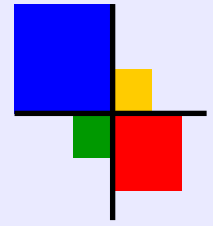
The VA recently approved benefits for Veterans who flew C123 airplanes after the Vietnam War and were exposed to Agent Orange. Most of these planes came stateside after the war at various Reserve and Guard bases and had Agent Orange residuals in them. Please contact our office for more information on these type claims if you were a Veteran that may have been exposed. Or, if you know a Veteran that was exposed, please tell them because they could be eligible for monetary benefits and health care. We will be glad to assist them with the VA claim process.

We could use volunteers at least 18 years or older to drive our van and transport Veterans to their medical appointments at Dorn VA hospital. If you or someone you know is interested in this, please call our office at 785-8400 for more information. We are desperate for new drivers and presently only have three drivers. We need more in order to drive more days and help those who served our country. We will be glad to assist you with everything you need to get started with the process.

It is an honor to serve
Lexington County!



Disability Compensation



Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that were incurred in or aggravated during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. A disability can apply to physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition, as well as mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



The benefit amount is graduated according to the degree of the Veteran's disability on a scale from 0 to 100 percent (in increments of 10 percent). Compensation may also be



paid for disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses.

If you have dependents, an additional allowance may be added if your combined disability is rated 30% or greater. Your compensation may be offset if you received disability severance pay or separation incentive payments. Military retirement pay for Veterans rated 40% and below, is offset by their VA compensation. Military retirees receiving 50% or higher receive both their VA compensation and full military retirement.



To be eligible for VA compensation, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Service in the Uniformed Services on active duty, OR
2. Active duty for training, OR
3. Inactive duty training, AND
4. You were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions, AND
5. You are at least 10% disabled by an injury or disease that was incurred in or aggravated during active duty or active duty for training, or inactive duty training

Note: If you were on inactive duty for training, the disability must have resulted from injury, heart attack, or stroke.



Evidence required to file a claim includes: Medical evidence of a current physical or mental disability, AND evidence of a relationship between your disability and an injury, disease, or event in military service. Medical records or medical opinions are required to establish this relationship.

Note: Under certain circumstances, VA may conclude that certain current disabilities were caused by service, even if there is no specific evidence proving this in your particular claim. The cause of a disability is presumed for the following Veterans who have certain diseases.

Continued on page 4

Disability Compensation continued from page 3

The VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain Veterans groups were caused by their military service. VA does this because of the unique circumstances of their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a Veteran in one of these groups, the VA presumes that the circumstances of his or her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded. These Veterans groups are:



1. Former prisoners of war.
2. Veterans who have certain chronic or tropical diseases that become evident within a specific period of time after discharge from service.
3. Veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation, mustard gas, or Lewisite while in service.
4. Veterans who were exposed to certain herbicides, such as by serving in Vietnam.
5. Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War.

HOW MUCH DOES VA PAY? The amount of basic benefit paid ranges, depending on how disabled you are. Note: You may be paid additional amounts, in certain instances, if:



1. you have very severe disabilities or loss of limb(s).
2. you have a spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s).
3. you have a seriously disabled spouse.

How to Apply: Apply online using eBenefits, OR work with an accredited representative or agent, OR go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you, OR call our office for assistance.

IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION

The van runs on certain Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm. Currently, we have very few van drivers and are running the van on a limited schedule.



If you need to schedule a ride on the DAV van, please call the office for dates and space availability.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS!!!

We are desperate for new drivers and presently have only three drivers. If you are 18 or older or know someone who may be interested in volunteering to drive the DAV van at least one day a month, please contact the office at 803-785-8400.



Just A Reminder...



Active and retired military personnel and their dependents with proper military ID will be admitted **FREE** the entire 12 days of the fair. This is in appreciation for their service to our country and its citizens.

Also, join in for a patriotic flag-raising ceremony each day of the fair at 12:00 noon near the South Gate as the State Fair salutes our military and the USA.

The State Fair opens on Wednesday, October 14th and runs through Sunday, October 25th.

County Council Needs You!

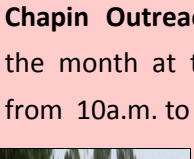
Veterans are needed to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at County Council meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. County Council meetings start at 4:30pm, so you would need to be present around 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400 if you are interested.



OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES



Batesburg/Leesville Outreach - 2nd Friday of the month at the Batesburg/Leesville Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



Chapin Outreach - 1st Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 10a.m. to 12 noon.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach - 1st Thursday of the month at the Gaston Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



Please note the change in time

for Chapin Outreach.

Appointments are strongly encouraged.

Call the office at 803-785-8400 to schedule a time.



Did you know...



By proclamation, Governor Nikki R. Haley

has declared Friday, September 18, 2015

as **POW/MIA Recognition Day.**



Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is also available.



VA Automobile Allowance

Service members and Veterans may be eligible for a one-time payment of not more than \$20,114.34 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance if you have certain service-connected disabilities. The grant is paid directly to the seller of the automobile and the service member or Veteran may only receive the automobile grant once in his/her lifetime. Certain service members and Veterans may also be eligible for adaptive equipment. Adaptive equipment includes, but is not limited to, power steering, power brakes, power windows, power seats, and special equipment necessary to assist the eligible person into and out of the vehicle. The VA may provide financial assistance in purchasing adaptive equipment more than once. This benefit is payable to either the seller or the Veteran or service member. **Important:** You must have prior VA approval before purchasing an automobile or adaptive equipment.

Eligibility Requirements (Automobile Grant)

1. You must be either a service member who is still on active duty or a Veteran, **AND**
2. You must have one of the following disabilities that are either rated as service-connected or treated as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C 1151 or, for a service member, the result of disease incurred or injury contracted in or aggravated by active duty:
 - A - Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet, **OR**
 - B - Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands, **OR**
 - C - Permanent impairment of vision in both eyes to a certain degree, **OR**
 - D - Severe burn injury, **OR**
 - E - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).



Eligibility Requirements (Adaptive Equipment)

1. You must be either a Service member who is still on active duty or a Veteran, **AND**
2. Meet the disability requirements for the automobile grant (see above), **OR**
3. Have ankylosis (immobility of the joint) of one or both knees or hips that VA recognizes as being service-connected or treats as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C. 1151.

Evidence Requirements

To support a claim for automobile allowance, the evidence must show that you are service-connected or are treated as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C 1151 or, for a service member, the result of disease incurred or injury contracted in or aggravated by active duty, for a disability resulting in:

1. The loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet, **OR**
2. The loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands, **OR**
3. Permanent impairment of vision in both eyes, resulting in central Visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with glasses, **OR**
4. Central Visual acuity that is greater than 20/200, if there is a visual field defect in which your peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual fields subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye, **OR**
5. Severe burn injury: Deep partial thickness or full thickness burns resulting in scar formation that cause contractures and limit motion of one or more extremities or the trunk and preclude the effective operation of an automobile, **OR**
6. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).



To support a claim for adaptive equipment, the evidence must show that you have a disability as shown above, **OR** you have ankylosis of at least one knee or one hip due to service-connected disability.

How to Apply

Complete VA Form 21-4502, "Application for Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment" and submit it to your local VA regional office. If you are entitled to adaptive equipment only (i.e., service connected for ankylosis of knees or hips) you should complete VA Form 10-1394, "Application for Adaptive Equipment - Motor Vehicle" and submit it to your local VA medical center.

The History of Johnny Appleseed

John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, was a 19th-century horticulturist who made great contributions to the westward expansion of the United States. Chapman, the son of a farmer, was born on September 26, 1774, in Leominster, Massachusetts. John was the second of three children. Little is known about his childhood. His mother Elizabeth became sick with tuberculosis and died a short time after the birth of her third child. His father, Nathaniel, served in America's war for independence.



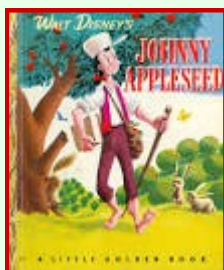
In 1801, he transported sixteen bushels of apple seeds down the Ohio River. He planted apple seeds in several areas near a place called Licking Creek. Chapman was careful about where he planted apple seeds. He did not leave them just anywhere. First, he would find rich, fertile land in an open area. Then, he cleared the land, carefully removing unwanted plants. Then, he planted his seeds in a straight line and built a fence around them. The fence helped to keep the young trees safe from animals. As the trees grew, he returned to repair the fence and care for the land. His trees often grew in land near settlements. He often sold his apple seeds to settlers. Sometimes, he gave away trees to needy settlers. When low on seeds, he returned east to Pennsylvania to get more. He got the seeds from apple presses, machines used to make apples into a drink called apple cider. Before long, Chapman's trees were growing in fields across Ohio and people began calling him Johnny Appleseed.



Johnny Appleseed was a small man with lots of energy and very religious. He had long dark hair and his eyes were black and bright. He never married and he lived very simply. For years, he traveled alone in the wilderness, without a gun or knife. He slept in the open air and did not wear shoes on his feet. Some people gave him clothing as payment for his apple trees. But sometimes he wore a large cloth bag or sack as clothing. The sack had holes for his head and arms. On his head, he wore a metal container for a hat. He also used this pot for cooking his food. People said he lived this way because he wanted to. He had enough money for shelter and clothes if he had wanted to buy these things. Johnny Appleseed looked like someone who was poor and had no home, yet he was a successful businessman. He used his money to improve his apple business and help other people. He was famous for his gentleness and bravery. Both settlers and Native Americans liked him. Everywhere he traveled, he was welcomed. Reports from that period suggest that some Native Americans believed he was "touched by God." Others called him a great medicine man.



In about 1830, John Chapman got some land in Fort Wayne, Indiana. There, he planted apple seedlings that grew and produced crops. He sold, traded and planted in other areas. Some reports said he also traveled to the nearby states of Kentucky and Illinois. His travels lasted more than forty years. It is estimated that, during his lifetime, he planted enough trees to cover an area of about two hundred sixty thousand square kilometers.



In 1845, John Chapman became sick and developed pneumonia during a visit to Fort Wayne. He died in the home of a friend, William Worth. Chapman was seventy years old. He was buried near Fort Wayne. The marker over his burial place reads, "He lived for others."

Though his legend may paint a picture of Johnny Appleseed planting at random and selflessly handing out seeds to needy settlers, in reality Chapman's path followed a strategic business plan. Chapman planted with thoughts about future markets for his crops. Children's books about Appleseed have, of course, removed the element of alcohol from the story, but Chapman's success was centered not around fresh apples but rather the cider they could create. Cider was an essential at the American dinner table at the time, so most homes had their own small orchard.

Continued on page 19

Are You in NEED of Home Repairs?



Weatherization Assistance Program...Working in your Community

'Making Communities Stronger, One Family at a time!'

Obtain needed repairs to your home through grant programs. The Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation & Weatherization Program is available to make repairs for low-medium income homeowners. Available to Veterans or Active Duty Members of any branch of the US military that are currently serving, have served, or their surviving spouse.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

INCOME GUIDELINES:

Must identify and verify all sources of income for each household member. Verification of income must be within 90 days of submission.

STATEMENT FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTION:

Must submit last two (2) months of bank statements for all accounts.

PROPERTY TAX:

Must be paid current.

OWN OR BUYING A HOME:

Must have thirty (30) days ownership.

COPY OF DEED:

Must be registered and recorded.

DD 214:

Or other proof of service.

Contact Capital Rehab Management (Joyce Pue) at 803.661.5772 (O) or 803.261.5772 (C)



Honor Flight is searching for WWII Veterans.

Please help find as many WWII Veterans as possible to join the October 14th flight. Time is not on our side as we have lost many of these WWII heroes and those that are still with us are becoming very frail. This may be the last flight of the year, so please help us locate WWII Veterans that have never had an opportunity to see "THEIR" WWII Memorial.

Go to www.honorflightsc.com to print an application.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of September/October?



September 2, 1789 - The third Presidential cabinet department, the U.S. Treasury, was established by Congress.



September 5, 1847 - Wild West legend Jesse James was born in Centerville, Missouri.



September 7, 1963 - The Professional Football Hall of Fame was dedicated in Canton, Ohio.



September 11, 2001 - The worse terrorists attack in US history occurred as four large passenger jets were hijacked and then crashed; killing nearly 3,000 people.



September 14, 1960 - OPEC was formed by representatives of oil-producing countries meeting in Baghdad.



September 15, 1890 - British mystery author Agatha Christie was born in Torquay, England.



September 24, 1957 - President Eisenhower ordered the National Guard to enforce racial integration of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas.



September 26, 1774 - American folk legend, Johnny Appleseed was born in Leominster, Massachusetts.



October 2, 1968 - California's Redwood National Park was established.



October 9, 1940 - John Lennon, member of The Beatles, was born in Liverpool, England.



October 15, 1917 - World War I spy Mata Hari was executed by a French firing squad at Vincennes Barracks, outside Paris.



October 21, 1915 - The first transatlantic radio voice message was made by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company from Virginia to Paris.



October 25, 1881 - Artist Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain.



October 26, 1825 - The Erie Canal opened as the first major man-made waterway in America.



October 28, 1955 - Microsoft founder Bill Gates was born in Seattle, Washington.

October 29, 1929 - The stock market crashed as over 16 million shares were dumped amid tumbling prices.



October 30, 1990 - Great Britain was connected with the European continent, via a new rail tunnel under the English Channel.

Camp Lejeune Updates

As part of the VA's ongoing commitment to provide care to Veterans and their families, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it will start the process of amending its regulations to establish presumptions of service connection for certain conditions resulting from exposure to contaminated drinking water at the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina.



This process is in addition to the healthcare the VA already provides for 15 conditions to eligible Veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, as a result of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. The VA also provides reimbursement of healthcare expenses for those 15 conditions to eligible family members who resided at Camp Lejeune during that time period.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently met with senators and the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to discuss the creation of presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The diseases that are currently being reviewed for potential presumptive service connection include kidney cancer, angiosarcoma of the liver, and acute myelogenous leukemia, which are known to be related to long-term exposure to the chemicals that were in the water at Lejeune from the 1950s through 1987. The chemicals are Benzene, Vinyl Chloride, Trichloroethylene and Perchloroethylene, which are known as volatile organic compounds, used in industrial solvents and components of fuels.

The VA will also work with ATSDR and potentially the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the body of scientific knowledge and research related to exposure to these chemicals and the subsequent development of other diseases. The VA will carefully consider all public comments received when determining the final scope of any presumptions.

Veterans with health problems they believe are related to exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune may file a claim for disability compensation online at www.ebenefits.va.gov, or visit their local VA office.



For more information, Veterans and family members should contact the nearest VA healthcare facility by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune. For further information on Camp Lejeune: VHA Office of Public Health has a website on Camp Lejeune historical water contamination at: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp.

The U.S. Marine Corps encourages all those who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune before 1987 to register for notifications regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater>.

Lexington County Veterans Group

- All Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 12 noon to 2:00 pm in the auditorium at 605 West Main Street in Lexington. The group meets for Health Issues and PTSD counseling with a licensed counselor.

The Veterans group also participates in various social activities such as group lunches, group dinners with wives/significant other, boat trips on Lake Murray, participation in the Lexington County Veterans parade and other general group tours.

For further information, please contact the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office at 803-785-8400.



Upcoming Events for the Group

The Veterans Group is collecting clothing for the homeless Veterans shelter on Duffie Drive in Lexington. You can drop donations by the office at 605 West Main Street. Donations will be accepted through Friday, September 4th. The Veterans group will give the donations to the shelter on Tuesday, September 8th.

There will be a presentation from an Edward Jones financial advisor on Tuesday, September 15th. This presentation is open to anyone.

Dang-it Dolls Workshops

Mark your calendar as the upcoming workshops are:
Saturday, September 12, 2015

&

Saturday, October 10, 2015

from 10am to 3pm

at the Cayce Masonic Lodge,
1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.



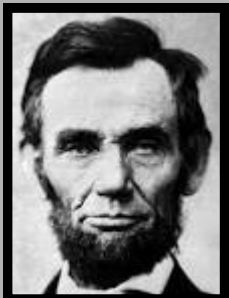
There is something for everyone to do and this is the one place where
THE MORE THE MERRIER
really counts.



Ft. Jackson News...

September 1- 9am to NOON - a Community Career Fair that features over 50 local employers recruiting for jobs. This is open to military personnel, Veterans, family members and surviving spouses of Veterans. For more information, please call Barbara Martin at 803-751-5256.

September 5- at 7pm - on Hilton Field, Gary Sinise and the LT. Dan Band will perform in a free event sponsored by the USO. For more information, please call, 803-751-6299.



*" I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives.
I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him."*

- Abraham Lincoln

Military Service and Social Security Benefits

Your Social Security benefit depends on your earnings, averaged over your working lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your Social Security benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes. The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.



If you served in the military after 1956, you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for periods of active duty from 1957 through 2001 can also be credited to your Social Security earnings record for benefit purposes.

- ◇ **From 1957 through 1967**, Social Security will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- ◇ **From 1968 through 2001**, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.
- ◇ **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

The information below explains how you can get credit for special earnings and applies only to active duty military service earnings from 1957 through 2001.

- ◇ **From 1957 through 1977**, you are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.
- ◇ **From 1978 through 2001**, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.
- ◇ **If you served in the military from 1940 through 1956**, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940, through December 31, 1956, under the following circumstances:

1. You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or
2. You are still on active duty; or
3. You are applying for survivors benefits and the Veteran died while on active duty.



You cannot receive credit for these special earnings if you are already receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period. These extra earnings credits are added to your earnings record when you apply for Social Security benefits.

NOTE: *In all cases, the additional earnings are credited to the earnings that Social Security averages over your working lifetime, not directly to your monthly benefit amount.*

Happenings Around Lexington County

During the Month of September

Friday, September 4th

Rhythm on the River Concert Series
For more information visit their website at rhythmontheriversc.com.



Saturday, September 5th through Monday, September 7th

36th Chapin Labor Day Festival & Parade
For more information visit their website at chapinisc.com/visitors/festivals&events.



Starts on Thursday, September 24th

Deceased Farms in Lexington (corn maze, etc.)
For more information visit their website at deceasedfarm.com or contact them @ 803-530-9434.



Friday, September 25th Saturday, September 26th

Irmo Okra Strut
For more information visit their website at irmookrastrut.com.



During the Month of October

Starts on Friday, October 2nd

Cayce/West Columbia Jaycees Hall of Horrors
Thursday, Friday, & Saturday nights
For more information visit their website at info@hallofhorrors.com or contact them @ 803-814-5858.



Friday, October 2nd Saturday, October 3rd

33rd Gaston Collard & BBQ Festival
For more information call 803-796-7725.



Saturday, October 3rd

Congaree Bluegrass Festival
For more information visit their website at bluegrassfestivalguide.com/congaree.



Wednesday, October 14th through Sunday, October 25th

SC State Fair
For more information visit their website at scstatefair.org.



Friday, October 16th through Friday, October 30th

Boo-At-The-Zoo
From 6 to 9 pm.
For more information visit their website at riverbanks.org/events/boo-at-the-zoo.



Starts on Saturday, October 17th

Gilbert House of Terror
For more information visit their website at gilberthouseofterror@gmail.com or contact them @ 803-892-5396.





More information on C-123 Aircraft Agent Orange Exposure Claims



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has determined that a select group of Air Force and Air Force Reserve personnel were exposed to herbicides through regular and repeated duties as ground, flight, or medical crew members on contaminated Operation Ranch Hand (ORH) C-123 aircraft that were used to spray Agent Orange in Vietnam.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any Air Force Veteran or Air Force Reservist who was assigned to one of the affected Reserve or active duty units as a ground, flight, or medical crew member on a contaminated aircraft and later developed a disability that has been linked to Agent Orange exposure should file a claim. VA has information indicating that few Air Force units (active duty and Reserve) had one or more of the contaminated aircraft during the period 1969 through 1986 (depending upon unit of assignment). VA compiled a list of these units and the dates on which they had the aircraft, which is publicly available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/residue-c123-aircraft/index.asp

Claimants are encouraged to apply online through the eBenefits portal. You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-526EZ, Fully Developed Claim (Compensation). Please ensure that each C-123 related disability is specifically annotated (e.g., Diabetes/C-123) on *Part II, Block 14* of VA Form 21-526, or *Section I, Block 11* of VA Form 21-526EZ. Also, if you have any of the following material, please submit it with your application:

- Discharge, separation papers (DD214 or equivalent)
- USAF Form 2096 (unit where assigned at the time of the training action)
- USAF Form 5 (aircraft flight duties)
- USAF Form 781 (aircraft maintenance duties)
- Dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates)
- Medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports)

War Dog Memorial to be Dedicated in November

The capital city is on target to get a new war memorial. This one will be dedicated to the dogs who serve or served in the military.

The bronze statue is a bit larger than life size and weighs 2,000 pounds. It was designed by renowned Illinois bronze artist, Renee Bemis. The replica shows the dog handler and the German Shepherd on point. It will sit on the bank just below where the current Vietnam memorial stands. This will be the largest war dog memorial in the entire United States.

The Monument is set to travel to North Carolina in October stopping at military bases along the way to South Carolina where it will be placed in its permanent home. The dedication is set to be on Veterans day this coming November. Founders hope to break ground and begin building the plaza where the statue will sit in September.

For more information and to donate to the War Dog Memorial Fund visit their webpage, www.wardogmemorialfund.com/donate.



DID YOU KNOW...

The VAMC Dorn now has a food pantry. Any Veteran in need may participate in the program. He or she must contact Voluntary Services and they will direct you to the food pantry. To contact Voluntary Services call (803) 776-4000 extension 6780.



JUST A REMINDER...

**COUNTY OFFICES
WILL BE CLOSED ON
MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 7TH
FOR LABOR DAY!**



Financial Distress

Having difficulty paying your copay bills?



VA has programs that may help you with your copay requirements!

- **Hardship** - If your income has recently changed, you may qualify for VA medical care without copays.
- **Repayment Plan** - You can establish a plan to spread your current health care debt over a specified period of time.
- **Compromise** - You can request a one-time monetary settlement eliminating your current health care debt.
- **Waiver** - You can request your current medical copay debts be waived for charges less than 6 months old (180 days). If a waiver is approved, you may also qualify to have Beneficiary Travel mileage reimbursement deductibles eliminated.

For additional information and to see if you qualify for these specific VA programs, contact

1-877-222-VETS (8387)



VA Eliminates Net Worth as Health Care Eligibility Factor

Elimination of Net Worth Makes More Veterans Eligible for Health Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, the VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Robert A. McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

"Everything that we do and every decision we make has to be focused on the Veterans we serve," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "We are working every day to earn their trust. Changing the way we determine eligibility to make the process easier for Veterans is part of our promise to our Veterans."

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Veterans may submit updated income information at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility. For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).



2015 LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS PARADE APPLICATION

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 @ 3:00PM

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 13TH YEAR

NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 23rd, PLEASE

(IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE GIVE ME A CALL, EVERYONE IS WELCOME IN THIS PARADE)

ALL MARCHING BANDS AND ROTC GROUPS WILL MEET IN THE EMPTY PARKING LOTS OF BUSINESSES 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. PARADE ROUTE WILL LINE UP AT HAYGOOD AND WEST BUTLER 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 & Description of Entry: _____

Special Request: _____

Entry Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Email address: _____ Fax : _____

Mail Applications To:

Lexington County Veterans Parade
Attn: Sharon Willis
212 South Lake Drive Ste 302
Lexington SC 29072
swillis@lex-co.com

For More Information Contact:

Lexington Veterans Affairs Office 803-785-8400
Sharon Willis @ 803-785-1454
Cell # 803-237-9617
Fax # 803-785-8300

Applications can also be found on the Lexington County VA website.

EVERYTHING WILL BE DONE TO PLACE YOU IN THE LINEUP THAT SHOWCASES YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT. ONCE THE LINEUP FOR THE PARADE HAS BEEN DETERMINED YOU WILL RECEIVE A MAP AND LOCATION FOR YOUR PLACE IN THE PARADE. PLEASE ENTER THE PARADE LINE UP ROUTE FROM SOUTH CHURCH AND GO UP BUTLER STREET. PLEASE DO NOT ENTER FROM COLUMBIA AVENUE OR MAIN. TURNING FLOATS AND TRAILERS AROUND IS VERY DIFFICULT. HAYGOOD STREET MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE LINEUP. MAIN STREET WILL BE CLOSED DOWN AT 2:45 SO PLEASE BE AT YOUR LOCATION BY 2:30.

(A CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT THE VETERANS MONUMENT FOLLOWING THE PARADE.)

**ALL OF THE VETERANS APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT
AND
THEY THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

NEED A FLOAT? CONTACT KIRBY FLOATS @ 803-359-3134.
(DISCOUNTS GIVEN TO VETERANS)

New VA website for Surviving Spouses

The Department of Veteran Affairs has created a new internet website for surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for survivors and dependents of Veterans who died after leaving the service. The site is organized into two broad categories: death in service and death after service. It provides visitors with information and about a wide range of benefits for surviving spouses, dependent children, and dependent parents of diseased Veterans and active duty personnel. The site also has information from, and links to, other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents.



Several options also apply to surviving retirees participating in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), where the spouse is lost through death, divorce or annulment, and the retiree later remarries. Unless the former spouse coverage was elected as part of the divorce, retirees who remarry have three choices. They can: (1) Resume the prior level of coverage; (2) Elect not to resume spouse SBP coverage, (this election is irrevocable), this election will not affect child coverage; or (3) If the original election was for reduced coverage, the retiree may request the base amount be increased.

There is also a link to frequently asked questions, and answers to most questions. For more specific questions the site tells how to contact the VA directly. The new website can be found at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors>. Some of the topics found on this page include:

- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
- Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
- Survivors Pension
- Home Loans
- Dependents' Educational Assistance Program
- Educational and Vocational Counseling
- Beneficiary Financial Counseling
- Civil Service Preference
- Commissary and Exchange Privileges
- Children of Vietnam Veterans with Certain Birth Defects
- Fiduciary Services

Changes to SC Laws

Recently there have been two major changes to SC laws effecting Veterans or surviving spouses.

- 1. Senate Bill 153** - States that certain surviving spouses are also extended property tax exemption on one vehicle if she is eligible for DIC benefits and the Veteran was 100% P&T at the time of death. This bill took effect on June 1, 2015.
- 2. Senate Bill 391** - States that active duty personnel and certain Veterans can receive in state tuition if residing in South Carolina and they do not have to meet the one year residency requirement. This bill took effect on July 1, 2015.

For more information go to
scstatehouse.gov/legislation.php
then search by bill number.





Free CPR Classes



Provided By
Lexington County EMS

Help Us Help You!

Statistics show that there is a staggering 95 percent mortality rate for the over 300,000 Americans who are victims of sudden cardiac arrest each year. More of these victims would survive if quality CPR and easy access to Automated External Defibrillators were available.

It is important for all Americans to learn critical lifesaving skills such as how to perform CPR how to use an AED and the need to increase public access to AEDs.

Lexington County EMS personnel are providing FREE Family and Friends Adult, Child and Infant CPR training for the Community. In just 2 hours you can Help Us Help You in an emergency. Changes in CPR make the training fun and easy to learn.

2015 Class Schedule

Single session classes are scheduled on:

February 12 th , 2015	August 13 th , 2015
April 9 th , 2015	October 8 th , 2015
June 11 th , 2015	December 10 th , 2015

All sessions are from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM

For more information or to schedule a session, please contact:

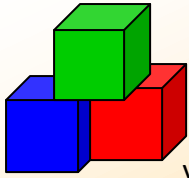
Lieutenant Micah Norman
803-785-5057
mnorman@lex-co.com

You can also find out more information on the AHA website or follow this link:

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRAndECC/CommunityTraining/CommunityProducts/Family-Friendsreg-CPR_UCM_303576_Article.jsp

Family & Friends CPR is for people who want to learn CPR but do not need a course completion card in CPR for their job. This course is ideal for schools and students, new parents, grandparents, babysitters and others interested in learning how to save a life.

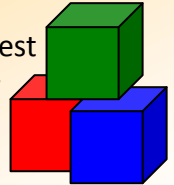
LABOR DAY



Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

Through the years the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From these, a movement developed to secure state legislation. By 1894, 31 states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership — *the American worker*.



Autumn Leaves

*Autumn leaves are falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
Autumn leaves are falling down,
Yellow, red, orange and brown!*

September is National Honey Month!



October is National Pizza Month!



The History of Johnny Appleseed continued from page 7

Chapman planted orchards along the pioneers' routes, staying ahead of other orchardist competition since his nomadic, unmarried lifestyle allowed him to cover more ground. He would then trade his seedlings with new settlers in the area so that they could grow apples for their new homes. Apples were an important food for the early settlers of North America. Apples offered something different in daily meals. They were easy to grow and store for use throughout the year. They could be eaten raw, cooked or dried for eating during the winter. And they could be made into other products, like apple butter and apple juice.

Fort Wayne still celebrates the life of "Johnny Appleseed" with a festival every September when apples are harvested.



Featured Medal:

World War II Victory Medal

The World War II Victory Medal was first issued as a service ribbon referred to as the "Victory Ribbon." By 1946, a full medal had been established which was referred to as the World War II Victory Medal. The medal was awarded to any member of the United States military, including members of the armed forces of the Government of the Philippine Islands, who served on active duty, or as a reservist, between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946. The corresponding medal from the World War I is the World War I Victory Medal. On August 8, 1946, the separate Merchant Marine World War II Victory Medal was established for members of the United States Merchant Marine who served during World War II.

The medal is awarded for service between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946, both dates inclusive. The National Personnel Records Center has reported some cases of service members receiving the award for simply a few days of service. As World War II ended on September 2, 1945, there may be cases of service members who had enlisted, entered officer candidate school, or had been a cadet or midshipman at the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy or the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1946, receiving the medal without having been a Veteran of World War II. The reason for this late date is that President Harry S. Truman did not declare an official end of hostilities until the last day of 1946.

The bronze medal is 1 3/8 inches in width. The obverse is a figure of Liberation standing full length with head turned to deter looking to the dawn of a new day, right foot resting on a war god's helmet with the hilt of a broken sword in the right hand and the broken blade in the left hand, the inscription *WORLD WAR II* placed immediately below the center. On the reverse are inscriptions for the Four Freedoms: *FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT* and *FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION* separated by a palm branch, all within a circle composed of the words *UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1941 1945*.

The suspension and service ribbon of the medal is 1 3/8 inches wide and consists of the following stripes: 3/8 inch double rainbow in juxtaposition (blues, greens, yellows, reds (center), yellows greens and blues); 1/32 inch White, center Old Glory Red, White; and 3/8 inch double rainbow in juxtaposition. The rainbow on each side of the ribbon is a miniature of the pattern used in the WWI Victory Medal.



Picture of World War II Victory Medal and Ribbon.

RUN WALK HONOR

OUR BRAVEST



Friday, September 18th, 2015 @ 7pm.
Colonial Center
801 Lincoln Street
Columbia, SC 29201

For more information visit their website at www.crowdrise.com/T2TSouthCarolina

***Coming in the Next Issue...Veterans Day Discounts,
Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) and special adaptive housing***