



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

July/August 2016



Lexington, SC.

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**At A Glance Calendar
July/August**

For a list of events in
Lexington County for July

Weekly on Tuesdays in
July

Monday, July 4th

Thursday, July 7th

Friday, July 8th

Tuesday, July 26th

For a list of events in
Lexington County for August

Weekly on Tuesdays in
August

Thursday, August 4th

Friday, August 5th

Friday, August 12th

Tuesday, August 23rd

See page 11 - Happenings Around
Lexington County

Lexington County Veterans Group
Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Independence Day
County Offices Closed
No DAV Van Scheduled

Gaston Outreach

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

County Council Meeting

See page 11 - Happenings Around
Lexington County

Lexington County Veterans Group
Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Gaston Outreach

Chapin Outreach

Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

County Council Meeting

Purple—Holidays/Special Days

Blue—Outreach dates

Red—County Offices Closed, No van
scheduled and Special Notices

Black—Director's appearances in the
County

Brown—County Council Meetings

Pink—Special Events throughout the
County

Orange—Director Out of Office

Green—Lexington County Veterans Group
Meetings



From the Director...

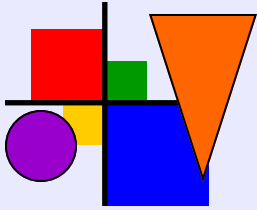
With July comes the annual celebration of America's Independence from the British. There are many local activities planned at the lake, churches, Fort Jackson and other venues but does the average American know what it took for independence to be won? My guess is no and many do not care. Thousands of men gave their lives in the American Revolutionary War in order for our country to live in freedom. If it were not for these brave souls, we would not be the country we are today. Other countries long to be like ours but can't due to their form of government so they remain oppressed. We are the free country of today because of the blood shed by patriots. Please remember what Independence Day is for and not just beaches, barbecues and sales.

We have been notified by county leadership that our building is being extensively renovated this autumn and winter and we will be relocating to the front of the building after renovations are complete. We are excited about this move and will have a brand new, state-of-the-art office complex with everything we need to better serve our Veterans. We expect to be in this new office complex next June and will keep you posted on the developments.

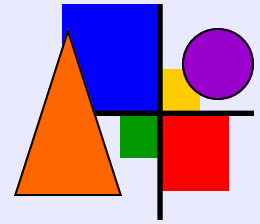
Have a safe and fun summer!

It is an honor to serve
Lexington County!





Survivors & Dependents Benefits



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

For a survivor to be eligible for Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC), the Veteran's death must have resulted from one of the following causes:

- 1 - A disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on active duty or active duty for training.
- 2 - An injury, heart attack, cardiac arrest, or stroke incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on inactive duty for training.
- 3 - A service-connected disability or a condition directly related to a service-connected disability.

DIC also may be paid to certain survivors of Veterans who were totally disabled from service-connected conditions at the time of death, even though their service-connected disabilities did not cause their deaths. The survivor qualifies if the Veteran was:

- 1 - Continuously rated totally disabled for a period of 10 years immediately preceding death; or
- 2 - Continuously rated totally disabled from the date of military discharge and for the last 5 years immediately preceding death; or
- 3 - A former POW who died after September 30, 1999, and who was continuously rated disabled for a period of at least one year immediately preceding death.

There is also a program called Parents' DIC. The VA provides an income-based monthly benefit to the surviving parent(s) of a service member or Veteran whose death was service-related. When countable income exceeds the limit set by law, no benefits are payable. The spouse's income must also be included if living with a spouse. A spouse may be the other parent of the deceased Veteran, or a spouse from remarriage. Unreimbursed medical expenses may be used to reduce countable income. Benefit rates and income limits change annually. DIC ends at midnight of the date of remarriage if a widow is under age 57; after age 57, the marital status does not affect this benefit.

Death Pension



The VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. To be eligible, spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-support because of disability before age 18. The Veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge. Longer periods of service may be required for Veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, or October 16, 1981, if an officer. If the Veteran died in service but

not in the line of duty, the death pension may be payable if the Veteran completed at least two years of honorable service.

Burial and Memorial Benefits for Survivors

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers several burial and memorial benefits for eligible survivors and dependents. These benefits may include internment at a state or national Veterans cemetery, plot, marker and more.



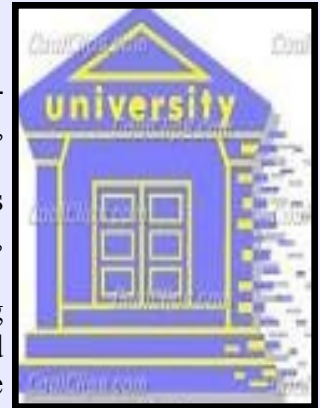
Continued on page 4

Survivors and Dependents Benefits continued from page 3

Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance

The VA provides educational assistance to qualifying dependents as follows:

- 1 - The spouse or child of a service member or Veteran who either died of a service-connected disability, or who has a permanent and total service-connected disability, or who died while such disability existed.
- 2 - The spouse or child of a service member listed for more than 90 days as currently Missing In Action (MIA), captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or detained or interned by a foreign government or power.
- 3 - The spouse or child of a service member who is hospitalized or is receiving outpatient care or treatment for a disability that is determined to be totally and permanently disabling, incurred or aggravated due to active duty, and for which the service member is likely to be discharged from military service.



Surviving spouses lose eligibility if they remarry before age 57 or are living with another person who has been held out publicly as their spouse. They can regain eligibility if their remarriage ends by death or divorce or if they cease living with the person. Dependent children do not lose eligibility if the surviving spouse remarries. The period of eligibility of Veterans' spouses expires 10 years from either the date they became eligible or the date of the Veterans' death. The VA may grant an extension. Children generally must be between the ages of 18 and 26 to receive educational benefits, though extensions may be granted. The period of eligibility for spouses of service members who died on active duty expires 20 years from the date of death. This is a change in law that became effective December 10, 2004. Spouses of service members who died on active duty whose 10-year eligibility period expired before December 10, 2004, now have 20 years from that date of death to use educational benefits. Effective October 10, 2008, Public Law 110-389 provides a 20-year period of eligibility for spouses of Veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability rating effective within 3 years of release from active duty.

VA Home Loan Guaranty

A VA loan guaranty to acquire a home may be available to an unmarried spouse of a Veteran or service member who died as a result of service-connected disabilities, a surviving spouse who remarries after age 57, or to a spouse of a service member officially listed as MIA or who is currently a POW for more than 90 days. Spouses of those listed MIA/POW are limited to one loan.



"No-Fee" Passports

"No-fee" passports are available to immediate family members (spouse, children, parents, brothers, and sisters) for the expressed purpose of visiting their loved one's grave or memorialization site at an American military cemetery on foreign soil. For additional information, write to the American Battle Monuments Commission, Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500, 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201, or telephone 703-696-6897, or visit the website at www.abmc.gov.

IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION CHANGES

The van runs on certain Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm.



If you need to schedule a ride on the DAV van, please call the office for dates and space availability at 803-785-8400.

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER VAN 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.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of July/August?



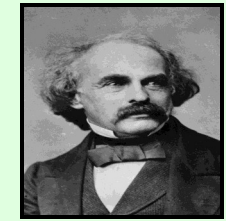
July 1, 1862 - The Bureau of Internal Revenue was established by an Act of Congress.



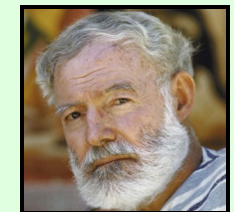
July 4, 1804 - Novelist and short-story writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts.

July 10, 1991 - Boris Yeltsin took the oath of office, becoming the first popularly elected president in Russia's thousand-year history.

July 16, 1945 - The experimental Atomic bomb, "Fat Boy", was set off at 5:30 a.m. in the desert of New Mexico, creating a mushroom cloud rising 41,000 ft.



July 19, 1863 - During the American Civil War, Union troops made a second attempt to capture Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina. The attack was led by the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who was killed along with half of the 600 men in the regiment. This battle marked the first use of black Union troops in the war.



July 21, 1899 - Ernest Hemingway was born in Oak Park, Illinois.

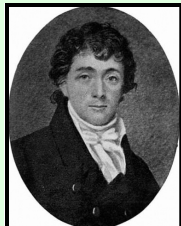


July 28, 1943 - During World War II, a firestorm killed 42,000 civilians in Hamburg, Germany. The firestorm occurred after 2,326 tons of bombs and incendiaries were dropped by the Allies.

July 31, 1790 - The U.S. Patent Office first opened its doors.



August 1, 1779 - "Star-Spangled Banner" author Francis Scott Key was born in Frederick County, Maryland.



August 3, 1492 - Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, with three ships, Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria.

August 5, 1962 - Film star, Marilyn Monroe died at age 36 from an overdose of sleeping pills.



August 14, 1935 - President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act establishing the system which guarantees pensions to those who retire at age 65.



August 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.



August 28, 1963 - The March on Washington occurred as over 250,000 people attended a Civil Rights rally in Washington, D.C., at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made his now-famous "I Have a Dream" speech.



August 31, 1997 - Britain's Princess Diana died at age 36 from massive internal injuries suffered in a high-speed car crash, reportedly after being pursued by photographers.





VA Launches Veterans Legacy Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the launch of the Veterans Legacy Program to memorialize Veterans' service and sacrifice through public educational programming. The program uses the rich resources found throughout VA national cemeteries, Soldiers' lots and monument sites.

"The Veterans Legacy Program is meant to bring to life the stories of Veterans buried in the VA national cemeteries through lesson plans, interactive maps and video vignettes," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert A. McDonald. "Behind every marker is a story—a story of what it meant to be a Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman at a particular moment in time. Our goal is to ensure that our nation does not forget their stories and their sacrifice." Using online educational products such as lesson plans, interactive maps and short video vignettes, the VA, through the Veterans Legacy Program, will engage the general public, students and educators. The VA launched this initiative earlier this year at two pilot sites: Beaufort National Cemetery in South Carolina and Riverside National Cemetery in California. Over the next several years, online educational products and programs will be developed for all the VA national cemeteries.



The VA has also formed a partnership with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to co-sponsor a "Teachers Institute," a workshop for educators who will conduct research at the VA and the ABMC cemeteries. Information about the program may be found at www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy/. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in the VA's 133 national cemeteries. The VA also provides funding to establish, expand, improve, and maintain 100 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam and Saipan. For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, the VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2015, the VA honored more than 353,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

For more information about the history of VA national cemeteries, visit www.cem.va.gov/history.

"Freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, and the spirit of men and so it must be daily earned and refreshed else like a flower cut from its life-giving roots, it will wither and die."

Dwight D. Eisenhower



Mark your calendar...



The 2016 Lexington County Veterans Parade will be held on Sunday, November 6th at 3pm.

VA Home Loans

The VA helps service members, Veterans, and eligible surviving spouses become homeowners. As part of their mission to serve you, they provide a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help you buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for your own personal occupancy. The VA home loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. The VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.



Benefits

Purchase Loans: helps you purchase a home at a competitive interest rate often without requiring a down payment or private mortgage insurance. Cash Out Refinance loans allow you to take cash out of your home equity to take care of concerns like paying off debt, funding school, or making home improvements.

Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL): also called the Streamline Refinance Loan can help you obtain a lower interest rate by refinancing your existing VA loan.

Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program: helps eligible Native American Veterans finance the purchase, construction, or improvement of homes on Federal Trust Land, or reduce the interest rate on a VA loan.

Adapted Housing Grants: helps Veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability purchase or build an adapted home or to modify an existing home to account for their disability.

Other Resources: many states offer resources to Veterans, including property tax reductions to certain Veterans.



Eligibility Requirements

The length of your service or service commitment and/or duty status may determine your eligibility for specific home loan benefits.

Purchase Loans and Cash-Out Refinance: VA-guaranteed loans are available for homes for your own personal occupancy. To be eligible, you must have a good credit score, sufficient income, a valid Certificate of Eligibility (COE), and meet certain service requirements.

Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL): The IRRRL is a "VA to VA" loan, meaning it can only be applied to refinance an existing VA loan. An IRRRL can be done only if you have already used your eligibility for a VA loan on the property you intend to refinance.

Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program: The NADL program helps Native American Veterans purchase, construct, improve, or re-finance a home on Native American trust lands. Your tribal organization must participate in the VA direct loan program. You must have a valid Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and meet certain service requirements.

Adapted Housing Grants: The VA helps Veterans with certain total and permanent disabilities related to your military service obtain suitable housing with either a Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) or Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant.

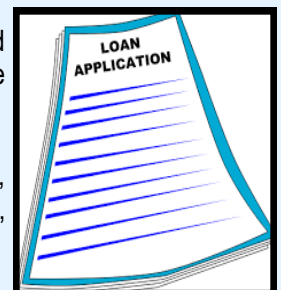
How to Apply

Purchase Loan & Cash-Out Refinance: VA loans are obtained through a lender of your choice once you obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). You can obtain a COE through eBenefits, by mail, and often through your lender.

Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan: A new Certificate of Eligibility (COE) is not required. You may take your Certificate of Eligibility to show the prior use of your entitlement or your lender may use our e-mail confirmation procedure in lieu of a certificate of eligibility.

Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program: First, confirm that your tribal organization participates in the VA direct loan program. NADL loans are obtained through a lender of your choice once you obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). You can obtain a COE through eBenefits, by mail, and often through your lender.

Adapted Housing Grants: You can apply for an SAH or SHA grant by either downloading and completing VA Form 26-4555 and submitting it to your nearest Regional Loan Center, or completing the online application.



If you have specific questions regarding VA home loan eligibility, please contact the Eligibility Center, located at the Atlanta Regional Loan Center, at the following address: Atlanta Regional Loan Center, Attention: COE (262), PO Box 100034, Decatur, GA 30031. Their toll-free number is: 1-888-768-2132.



Dang-it Dolls Workshops

There will be no meetings in July or August.

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

Support Matters.



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

Lexington County Veterans Group

****There has been a permanent change in the meeting time ****



All Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon 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.

JULY IS EYE INJURY PREVENTION MONTH



AUGUST IS IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH



Attention Commanders of Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County, our office is looking for a contact name and number for all American Legion post, DAV chapters, VFW's, etc. Please contact our office with this information.



American
Red Cross

Emergency Communication Services

Serving active duty service members and their families, DoD civilians and families serving overseas, National Guard and Reserves, and veterans.

1-877-272-7337

Job Hunting?

The VA medical center and regional office is hiring Veterans.

Visit USAjobs.com for more information.



Happenings Around Lexington County

July 4th Weekend

**Friday, July 1st -
Monday, July 4th**

Lexington County Blowfish Baseball Games
Games start @ 7:05pm—fireworks after each game.
For more information and tickets go to
www.gblowfishbaseball.com.



Saturday, July 2nd

Lake Murray Boat Parade
Parade begins @ 12 noon at Bombing Island heading towards the dam. For more information call (803) 781-5940.



Saturday, July 2nd

Lake Murray Fireworks display
Starts at dusk (approximately 9:15pm)
Fireworks will be set off from two great locations: Spence Island and Dreher Island State Park. The show is choreographed to a patriotic concert that will air simultaneously on B106.7; 98.5; or Z93.1. The best places to view the fireworks are Dreher Island State Park and both parks at the dam.



Sunday, July 3rd

Star Spangled Symphonic Salute
Saluda Shoals Park
Concert starts @ 8pm - free admission
For more information call (803) 772-1228.



Monday, July 4th

58th Lexington County Peach Festival
Gilbert, South Carolina
Parade starts @ 9:30am; Fireworks start @ 10pm
For more information go to
www.lexingtoncountypeachfestival.com.



During the Month of August

Friday, August 5th

Brew at the Zoo @ Riverbanks Zoo
7 to 9:30pm
For more information go to
www.riverbanks.org/brew-at-the-zoo.



**Saturday, August 6th -
Sunday, August 7th**

Columbia Gun & Knife Show
Jamil Road, Columbia
For more information call (803) 463-9377.



**Friday, August 12th -
Saturday, August 13th**

35th SC Peanut Party in Pelion
Pelion, South Carolina
For more information go to
www.scpelionpeanutparty.com.



Saturday, August 27th

Wine on the River
7 to 10pm
Alexander Road, West Columbia
For more information call (803-727-8047).



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)

VA ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY CARE CALL CENTER TO HELP VETERANS WITH CHOICE PROGRAM BILLING ISSUES

Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA's efforts to modernize VA's customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time) for assistance. The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper Veteran billing and assist community care medical providers with delayed payments. The VA staff are also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on Veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers. The VA is urging Veterans to continue to work with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity. The VA acknowledges that delayed payments and inappropriately billed claims are unacceptable and have caused stress for Veterans and providers alike. For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time) to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

Individual Unemployability Benefits

What is Individual Unemployability?

Individual Unemployability is a part of the VA's disability compensation program that allows the VA to pay certain Veterans compensation at the 100% rate, even though the VA has not rated their service-connected disabilities at the total level.



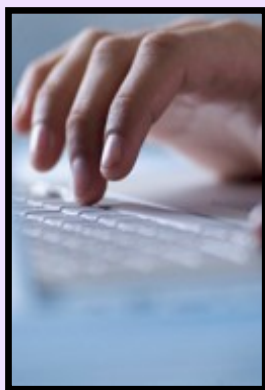
What is the Eligibility Criteria for Individual Unemployability?

A Veteran must be unable to maintain substantially gainful employment as a result of his/her service-connected disabilities. Additionally, a Veteran must have:

- * one service-connected disability ratable at 60 percent or more, OR
- * two or more service-connected disabilities, at least one disability ratable at 40 percent or more with a combined rating of 70 percent or more.

How do I Apply?

Submit VA Form 21-8940, Veteran's Application for Increased Compensation Based on Unemployability to our office or your nearest VA regional office. You can also call our office to schedule an appointment with us.



Can I work?

Veterans who are in receipt of Individual Unemployability benefits may work as long as it is not considered substantially gainful employment. The employment must be considered marginal employment.

- * **Substantially gainful employment** is defined as employment at which non-disabled individuals earn their livelihood with earnings comparable to the particular occupation in the community where the Veterans reside.
- * **Marginal employment** is generally deemed to exist when a Veteran's earned income does not exceed the amount established by the U.S. Census Bureau as the poverty level for the Veteran only.

What is the poverty level?

Per the U.S. Census Bureau the poverty levels depends upon the Veteran's age. If a Veteran is up to age 65, the poverty level is \$11,702 per year. If the Veteran is over age 65, the poverty level is \$10,788.

What if I don't meet the percentage Criteria?

Special consideration will be given for Veterans when the following criteria is met:

- * The Veteran is considered unemployable due to a service-connected disability(ies) but fails to meet the minimum percentage standards, OR
- * There is evidence of exceptional or unusual circumstances to impairment of earning capacity due to disabilities (for example, interference with employment or frequent periods of hospitalization)

Note: Veterans may have to complete an employment questionnaire once a year in order for the VA to determine continued eligibility to Individual Unemployability.



County Council Needs You!

Veterans are still 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 please be present around 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400, if you are interested.



KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATION MEDAL

These medals were given out to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Korean war. The medal was commissioned and made by the South Korean government as a



sign of appreciation and thanks for American soldiers. The lanyard of the medal depicts the flags of all the nations involved in the war and the medal itself contains a piece of the wire from the DMZ.

Do you know of a Korean War Veteran in Lexington County that hasn't received a Korean War Commemoration medal? If so, please have them contact or come by our office. If the Veteran is deceased, this medal can also be awarded to the surviving spouse.

Our office has a few medals remaining to award, so it is first come first served.

OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES



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

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



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

*Appointments are strongly encouraged.
Call the office at 803-785-8400
to schedule a time.*

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.



Combat Veterans

Get Telephonic Health Care Application Option

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it is amending its enrollment regulations to allow Veterans to complete applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. The change is effective immediately for Combat Veterans and will be effective July 5, 2016, for all Veterans. This phased implementation accelerates the VA's effort to enroll all Combat Veterans with pending applications as part of its ongoing Veterans Enrollment Rework Project. The VA is working to complete the review and rework of all pending health enrollment records for living and deceased Veterans this summer. By adding this telephone application option to the VA's regulations, the VA will now offer three ways to enroll. This change provides Veterans an even more convenient way to apply for enrollment, in addition to the paper VA Form 10-10EZ and online enrollment application process. For more information, Veterans can contact the Health Eligibility Center Enrollment and Eligibility Division toll free at 1-855-488-8440.



NEW

SOUTH CAROLINA POW MEDAL

South Carolina Veterans who were prisoners of war during a war time period are eligible to receive a new special state POW medal for their time in captivity. The POW medal was created by the Legislature in a June 2014 law that authorizes the Governor to present the award to South Carolina residents who are on federal POW lists. Any former POW who received an honorable discharge and is a South Carolina citizen can apply for the medal. Former prisoners from WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, or other conflicts are also eligible. Surviving spouses or descendants can also apply for the medal once.



If you live in Lexington County or know someone who does and they meet the above requirements, please call the Lexington County VA office at 803-785-8400 with their name and contact information.



CLOSINGS...

County offices will be closed on the following date:
Monday, July 4th for Independence Day



For basic information and questions,
please check out our webpage at
www.lex-co.sc.gov/departments/DeptRZ/va/Pages/index.aspx
A list of the Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County
and copies of the newsletter are also on our webpage.

Financial aid. College applications. Choosing a major.

It can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be.

Whether you need help applying for financial aid, completing college applications, or just some helpful guidance, Midlands Technical College's Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) staff is ready to assist you.

What is EOC?

EOC provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified individuals who want to begin or continue a college education. The program also provides in-depth financial aid information and assistance. EOC collaborates with various agencies in Fairfield and Lexington counties to provide services.

What are some of the services EOC provides?

- › College Admissions Counseling
- › College Transfer Assistance
- › Financial Aid Assistance and Counseling
- › Financial Decision Making Assistance
- › GED Referral Assistance
- › Homeless and Foster Youth Educational Assistance
- › Military and Veteran Referral Services
- › Ex-Offender Referral Services

Am I eligible for EOC assistance?

Many area residents are eligible for assistance. Please contact EOC to discuss your eligibility.

How do I apply for the program?

Please call 803.822.3749 or 1.800.922.8038 ext. 3749 to schedule an appointment.

Where will I go for my appointment?

EOC's main office is on the MTC Airport Campus in Lexington Hall Room 170; its other office is located on the MTC Beltline Campus, Student Center, Room 227. EOC also offers regularly scheduled hours at numerous outreach sites in Fairfield and Lexington counties.

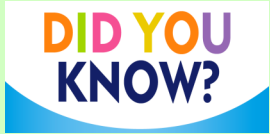


Disclaimer: Although the EOC staff is employed by Midlands Technical College, they do not recruit participants for the college. As an EOC participant, you can receive assistance in applying to any continuing education program, college, and/or university. If you have a disability requiring special accommodations, please contact MTC EOC.

For more information, please call 803.822.3749 or 1.800.922.8038 ext. 3749,
or visit MIDLANDSTECH.EDU/eoc

Did you know...

- * 12% of Veterans file Appeals
- * Nationwide approximately 80,000 appeals are filed annually
- * There are 65 judges in Washington, D.C. that work appeals



News from VAMC Dorn

The MyHealthVet office has moved to the main facility. The office is now located in Building 100A, Room 1D104, which is directly across the hall from the elevators to the eye clinic and directly adjacent to the White and Blue team area. For more information, call (803) 695-6783.



HELP NEEDED

Help is needed at Lexington Interfaith Community Services (LICS). They are in particular need for folks to assist at the donation door. They have staff members who would work with them and supervise.

This position entails customer service by greeting community members as they drive up to donate items, assisting them with carrying in their items, possibly giving receipts, and then sorting the items. It is physical work, but they can work around any slight limitations. Lifting is often required and they may also be asked to load items onto a truck.

If you are interested, contact: Kitti Clayton, Volunteer Coordinator, at 803-957-6656 ext: 227.



The new three-story parking garage for DORN should be completed sometime in 2017. The garage, which will be located behind the main hospital (Building 100) and directly adjacent to Building 106, is expected to support more than 400 vehicles. The unfortunate side is that during construction Dorn will actually lose about 100



spaces, which will make parking even more of a challenge. During construction, Veterans are encouraged to arrive for their scheduled appointments at least one hour prior as parking will be at a premium.

About Our Office

This office is employed by Lexington County not the Federal VA. The Lexington County Veterans' Affairs Office is an advocate for Veterans and their surviving dependents. We provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and VA medical care. The Lexington County VA Office assists former and present members of the US Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: service-connected disabilities and non-service connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits. We are not trained in Social Security or Department of Defense Benefits but can assist with some of these forms.

The VA has a website anyone can access for all VA questions, SEP user guides, regulations, policies, laws and any other VA resources. The website is: www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov.



July is National Ice Cream Month!



August is National Catfish Month!

Featured Medal:

The European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal

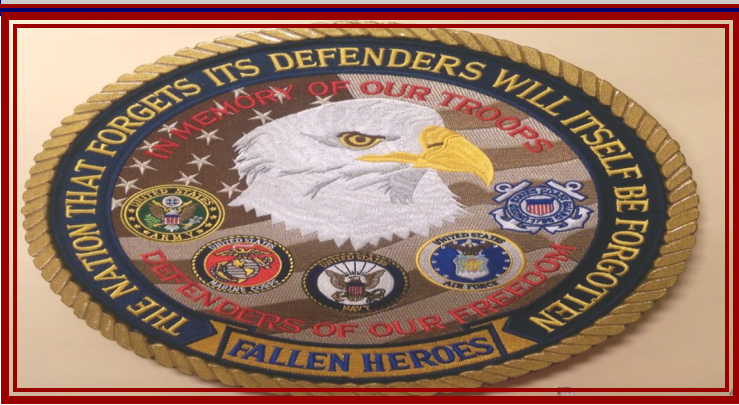
The European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal is a military award of the United States Armed Forces which was first created on November 6, 1942 by Executive Order 9265 issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The medal was intended to recognize those military service members who had performed military duty in the European Theater (to include North Africa and the Middle East) during the years of the Second World War.

The medal design was submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts on September 17, 1946 and the first sample was completed in July 1947. The first recipient of the European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal was General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower on July 24, 1947 in recognition of his service as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force during World War II. Originally known as the “EAME Ribbon”, the European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal is awarded for any service performed between December 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946, dates inclusive, provided such service was performed in the following geographical theater areas: West boundary -- From the North Pole, south along the 75th meridian west longitude to the 77th parallel north latitude, thence southeast through Davis Strait to the intersection of the 40th parallel north latitude and the 35th meridian west longitude, thence south along that meridian to the 10th parallel north latitude, thence southeast to the intersection of the equator and the 20th meridian west longitude, thence along the 20th meridian west longitude to the South Pole. East boundary -- from the North Pole, south along the 60th meridian east longitude to its intersection with the eastern border of Iran, thence south along that border to the Gulf of Oman and the intersection of the 60th meridian east longitude, thence south along the 60th meridian east longitude to the South Pole.



Picture of European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and Ribbon.

The Bronze medal is 1 3/8 inches in width. On the obverse is a LST landing craft and troops landing under fire with an airplane in the background below the words *EUROPEAN AFRICAN MIDDLE EASTERN CAMPAIGN*. On the reverse, an American bald eagle close between the dates *1941 - 1945* and the words *UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*. The ribbon is 1 3/8 inches wide and consists of the following stripes. the 3/16 inch Brown 67136 which represents the sands of Africa. The 1/16 inch Irish Green 67189, 1/16 inch White 67101 and 1/16 inch Scarlet 67111 represent Italian colors. The 1/4 inch Irish Green represents the green fields of Europe. The center, 1/8 inch tri-parted Old Glory Blue 67178, White and Scarlet, are taken from the American Defense Service Medal ribbon and refers to the continuance of American Defense after Pearl Harbor. Next is a 1/4 inch Irish Green, again the green fields of Europe. The 1/16 inch White; 1/16 inch Black 67138, 1/16 inch White represent Germany. Lastly 3/16 inch Brown, again representing the sands of Africa.



Coming in the Next Issue...

100% P&T benefits;
long term care; &
VA nursing homes