



# LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

*"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"*

September/October 2019



Lexington, SC.

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**At a Glance Calendar  
September/October**

For a list of events in Lexington County for September & October	See page 18 - Happenings Around Lexington County
Weekly on Tuesdays in September	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon
Sunday, September 1st - through Wednesday, September 11th	Director Out of the Office
Monday, September 2nd	Labor Day County Offices Closed
Sunday, September 8th	Grandparents Day
Tuesday, September 10th	County Council Meeting
Wednesday, September 11th	Patriot Day
Friday, September 13th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, September 14th	Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information, see page 16
Friday, September 20th	Tunnel to Towers Run - for more information, see page 23
Monday, September 23rd	Fall Begins
Weekly on Tuesdays in October	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon
Thursday, October 3rd	Gaston Outreach
Friday, October 4th	Director Out of the Office
Tuesday, October 8th	County Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 9th through Sunday, October 20th	SC State Fair - for more info, see flyer on page 19
Friday, October 11th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, October 12th	Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information, see page 16
Monday, October 14th	Columbus Day
Monday, October 14th through Friday, October 18th	SCACVAO Fall Conference Director Out of the Office
Wednesday, October 16th	Bosses Day
Tuesday, October 22nd	County Council Meeting
Thursday, October 24th	United Nations Day
Thursday, October 31st	Halloween

**From the Director...**

A new school year is upon us and all the excitement that goes with it, as well as the diligent work of our educators. Please support our kids and teachers and let them know you appreciate them. In my family, there are many teachers and I deeply appreciate what they do every day.

Our claim numbers and walk-ins have been way above normal this year and we are diligent in the work we do for Veterans and their widows. I attribute these numbers getting higher because of our office move to the front of the building, where we are more visible. If you haven't seen our new office, please drop by for a visit and a tour. We are so proud of it!

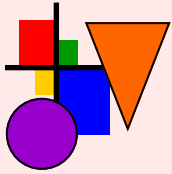
As we gear up for fall season and college football, regardless of who your team is, we can all cheer for the athletes who play their hearts out. We wish for success in their academic and athletic endeavors.

Enjoying the journey,

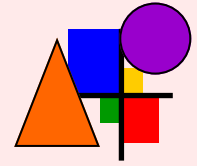


**CALENDAR KEY**

Purple—Holidays/Special Days	Brown—County Council Meetings
Blue—Outreach dates	Pink—Special Events throughout the County
Red—County Offices Closed, and Special Notices	Orange—Director Out of Office
Black—Director's appearances in the County	Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings



# Appeals Modernization Program



## What is Appeals Modernization?

On August 23, 2017, the President signed the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* (Appeals Modernization Act) into law, creating a new decision review process that allows VA to improve the delivery of benefits and services to Veterans and their families. The new process gives Veterans choice and control, and all communications are written in plain language.

The new Appeals Modernization process allows Veterans to seek faster resolution of their disagreement with a VA decision. If you receive an initial claim decision after February 2019 and you disagree, you can choose one of three new lanes to have your disagreement reviewed: as a supplemental claim, through a higher-level review, or by appealing directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. The Appeals Modernization Act establishes a new decision review process for disagreements with VA decisions that is timely, transparent and fair.

## More information on Appeals Modernization

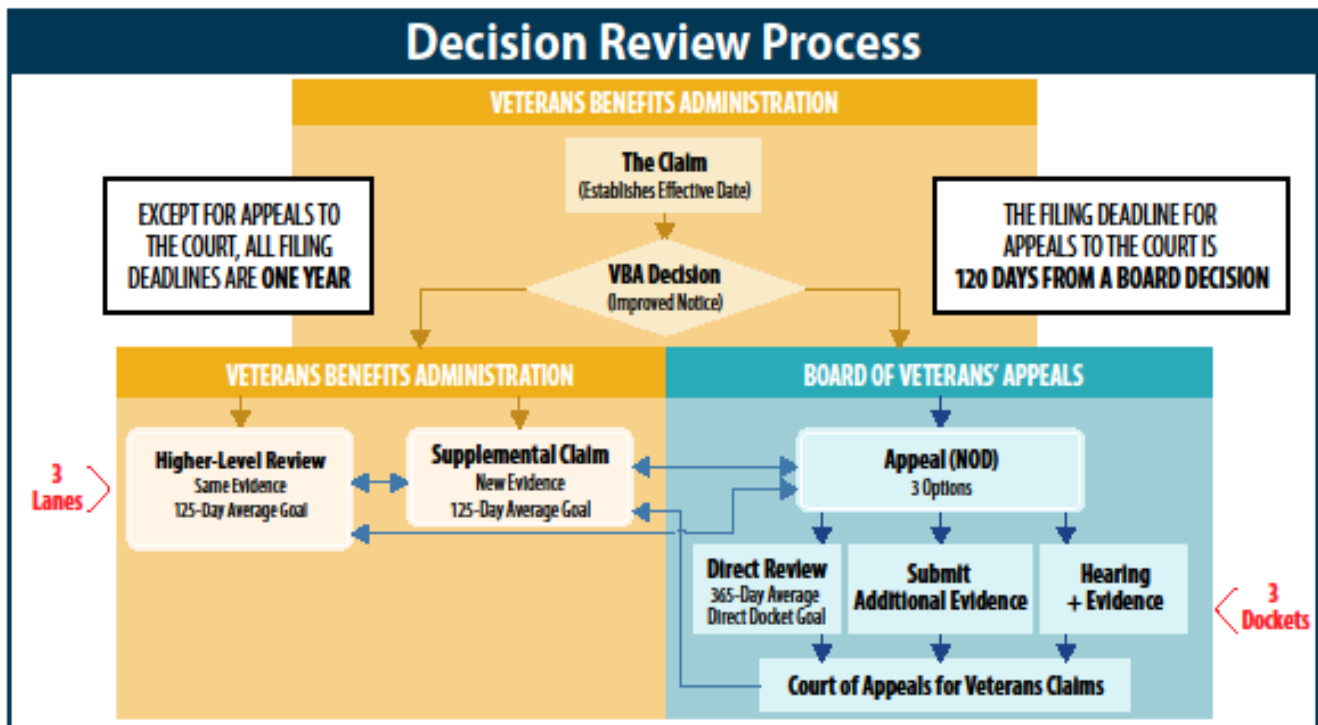
For more information about VA's implementation of the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act* or to access the applicable forms, go to: [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp) and follow the instructions for submission.

### Questions?

- Call 1-800-827-1000
- Reach out to your local VA regional office
- If you have a VA accredited representative, contact them for more information on Appeals Modernization

Go to [www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status/](http://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status/) to check the status of your appeal using the Appeals Status Tool.

Veterans in the legacy appeals process who receive a Statement of the Case (SOC) or Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC) after February 2019 will be eligible to opt-in to the new Appeals Modernization process.



Continued on page 4

## Which Review Lane is Right For You?

### Supplemental Claim Lane (decisions within 125 days on average)

- ✔ Select this option if you have additional evidence that is new and relevant to support your benefit claim.
- ✔ VA will assist you in gathering new and relevant evidence to support your claim.
- ✔ VA's review will include any new and relevant evidence submitted since we last decided your claim.

### Higher-Level Review Lane (decisions within 125 days on average)

- ✔ A higher-level review consists of an entirely new review of your claim by a more experienced claims adjudicator.
- ✔ Select this option if you have no additional evidence to submit in support of your claim, but you believe that there was an error in the initial decision.
- ✔ VA cannot assist you in gathering new evidence, but if the higher-level reviewer discovers an error in VA's duty to assist in the prior decision your claim will return to decision makers to correct the error.
- ✔ You or your representative can request an optional, one-time, informal telephone conference with the higher-level reviewer to identify specific errors in the case, although this may cause a delay in the processing of your higher-level review.

### Appeal to the Board Lane

- ✔ If you choose the Board, select one of the three following options:
  - **Direct Review**  
You do not want to submit additional evidence or have a hearing.
  - **Evidence Submission**  
You choose to submit additional evidence without a hearing. You will have 90 days from your Notice of Disagreement (NOD) to submit any additional evidence.
  - **Hearing**  
You choose to submit additional evidence and have a hearing with a Veterans Law Judge. You will be scheduled for a Board hearing and may submit evidence at the hearing or within the 90 day window following the scheduled hearing.

## What If You Still Disagree with a Decision?

If you disagree with a decision from the Supplemental Claim Lane, you may choose to resubmit the claim as another supplemental claim with new evidence, as a higher-level review or as an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

If you disagree with a decision from the Higher-Level Review Lane, you may choose to resubmit the claim as a supplemental claim or as an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

If you disagree with a Board decision you may either resubmit as a supplemental claim or through an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

# Did you know?

The VA has a new suicide hotline number. It is 1-855-948-2311.

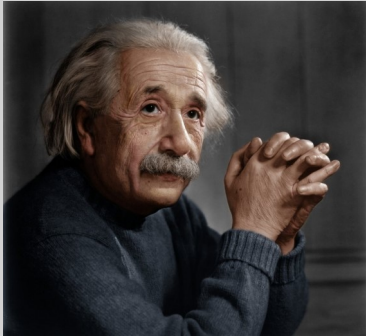


September is... National Suicide Awareness Month  
www.NationalDayCalendar.com



October is... National Crime Prevention Month  
www.NationalDayCalendar.com

“A hundred times every day, I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.”



- Albert Einstein

**“Why I Served Series”**  
Our County Public Information Officer, Harrison Cahill, has started a “Why I Served Series.” He would like to record some video stories of Veterans explaining why they served. If you are interested or know of a Veteran who would be, please call Harrison at (803) 212-5553 or email him at hcahill@lex-co.com to set this up. He records the interviews in our new conference room, where you will have privacy and can take your time in being interviewed. Harrison usually pares down these interviews to three to five minute videos that are shown on the Lexington County Facebook page.



**Veterans Crisis Line**

### Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

**Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 or text 838255.**

The Veterans Crisis line is a free, anonymous, confidential resource that’s available to anyone, even if you’re not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare. The Veterans Crisis Line does not charge for texting to 838255, but message and data rates may apply.

# VIETNAM BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS

## *Disability benefits available To those serving offshore*

### **Agent Orange Exposure in the Republic of Vietnam Waters (Blue Water Navy)**

Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure. This extension of the presumption is a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law takes effect January 1, 2020.

The law states that Veterans aboard a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia as defined in Public Law 116-23, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides such as Agent Orange and may be entitled to service connections for conditions related to that exposure.

To be entitled to disability compensation benefits, these Veterans must have one or more of the conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure that are listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309E.

### **What conditions are related to Agent Orange exposure?**

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chlordane, or other acneform disease consistent with chlorance
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus, Type 2
- Ischemic heart disease
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin's disease
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Multiple myeloma
- Parkinson's disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma).

### **How do I file a claim for disability compensation?**

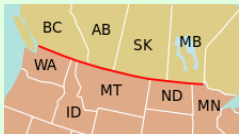
- Apply online using [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), OR
  - Work with an accredited representative or agent, OR
  - Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you.
1. You must state on your application that you are filing for one of the presumed Agent Orange conditions.
  2. Include any evidence you have of service in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the required timeframe. Include the name(s) of the ship(s) and the date(s) you crossed within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam, if you have that information.
  3. Provide medical evidence showing a diagnosis of the current Agent Orange presumptive condition or tell the VA where you are being treated.

For more information on how to apply and for tips on making sure your claim is ready to be processed by the VA, visit the Disability Compensation web page at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call the VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000.

The Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 will take effect on January 1, 2020. Veterans can file claims at any time, and they will be decided after the law is implemented. Blue Water Navy claims and appeals currently in process have been placed on hold (stayed) until the new rules go into effect. The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives the VA until January 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, the VA is complying with the law that congress wrote and passed.

# 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, 1997** – Mother Teresa died in Calcutta at the age of 87.

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

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

**September 15, 1916** – Tanks were first used in combat.

**September 17, 1930** - Construction began on the Hoover Dam.

**September 18, 1947** – The US Air Force was established as a separate military service.

**September 23, 1991** - Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union.

**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 1, 1908** – The Model T went on sale.

**October 4, 1957** – The space race began as Russia launched the first satellite into orbit.

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

**October 13, 1775** – The US Navy was born.

**October 20, 1818** – The US and Britain agreed to set the US/Canadian border at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel.

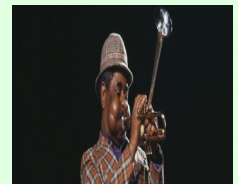
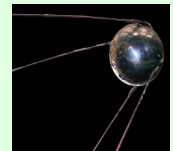
**October 21, 1917** – Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie was born in Cheraw, SC.

**October 24, 1945** – The United Nations was founded.

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



## 2019 Holiday Basket Wish List

**Ham or Turkey (frozen or canned)**  
**Canned Sweet Potatoes**  
**Canned Collards**  
**Stuffing Mix**  
**Cranberry Sauce**  
**Cornbread Mix**  
**Green Beans**  
**Dessert Mix (complete kit)**



We will begin to give these to clients  
Thanksgiving: Friday, November 1  
Christmas: Monday, December 2

**Questions?** Anna Smith  
[anna@missionlexingtonsc.org](mailto:anna@missionlexingtonsc.org)  
803-957-6656 x 228

You may pack a basket or box and bring it completed, or simply bring the items and we will prepare. Feel free to add a personal note or prayer for the family.

*"The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40*



## **Incarcerated Veterans/Fugitive Felons**

### **I**ncarcerated Veterans

Veterans can sometimes run into issues with law enforcement and the criminal justice system resulting in incarceration. It is important that justice-involved Veterans are familiar with VA benefits including what VA benefits they may still be eligible to receive, what happens to the VA benefits they are already receiving if they become incarcerated, and what programs are available to assist them with reintegrating back into the community once released from incarceration. Despite the circumstances, some justice-involved Veterans may be eligible for VA benefits. Please be aware many VA benefits can be affected by incarceration.



### **VA Programs for Justice-Involved Veterans**

#### **Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program**

The HCRV Program is designed to help incarcerated Veterans successfully reintegrate back into the community after their release. A critical part of HCRV is providing information to Veterans while they are incarcerated, so they can plan for re-entry themselves. A primary goal of the HCRV program is to prevent Veterans from becoming homeless once they are reintegrated back into the community.

#### **Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Initiative**

The VJO initiative is designed to help Veterans avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration by ensuring eligible justice-involved Veterans receive timely access to VA health care, specifically mental health and substance use services (if clinically indicated) and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

### **How Incarceration Affects Eligibility for VA Benefits**

The VA can pay certain benefits to Veterans who are incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution; however, the amount depends on the type of benefit and reason for incarceration.

#### **Disability Compensation**

VA disability compensation payments are reduced if a Veteran is convicted of a felony and imprisoned for more than 60 days. Veterans rated 20 percent or more are limited to the 10 percent disability rate. For a Veteran whose disability rating is 10 percent, the payment is reduced by one-half. Once a Veteran is released from prison, compensation payments may be reinstated based upon the severity of the service connected disability(ies) at that time. Payments are not reduced for recipients participating in work release programs, residing in halfway houses (also known as "residential re-entry centers"), or under community control. The amount of any increased compensation awarded to an incarcerated Veteran that results from other than a statutory rate increase may be subject to reduction due to incarceration.

#### **Pension**

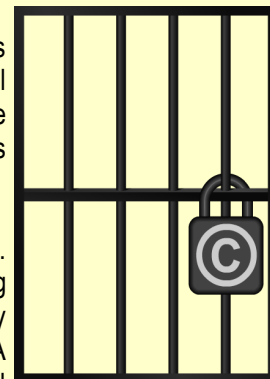
Veterans in receipt of VA pension will have payments terminated effective the 61st day after imprisonment in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony or misdemeanor. Payments may be resumed upon release from prison if the Veteran meets VA eligibility requirements. Failure to notify VA of a Veteran's incarceration could result in the loss of all financial benefits until the overpayment is recovered.

#### **Apportionment to Spouse or Children**

All or part of the compensation not paid to an incarcerated Veteran may be apportioned to the Veteran's spouse, child or children, and dependent parents on the basis of individual need. In determining individual need, consideration shall be given to such factors as the claimant's income and living expenses, the amount of compensation available to be apportioned, the needs and living expenses of other claimants as well as any special needs, if any, of all claimants.

#### **Education Benefits**

Beneficiaries incarcerated for other than a felony can receive full monthly benefits, if otherwise entitled. Convicted felons residing in halfway houses (also known as "residential re-entry centers"), or participating in work-release programs also can receive full monthly benefits. Claimants incarcerated for a felony conviction can be paid only the costs of tuition, fees, and necessary books, equipment, and supplies. VA cannot make payments for tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies if another Federal State or local program pays these costs in full. If another government program pays only a part of the cost of tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies, VA can authorize the incarcerated claimant payment for the remaining part of the costs.



Continued on page 10

## Incarcerated Veterans/Fugitive Felons

*continued from page 9*

### Additional Information

Each VA Regional Office has a Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinator who assists justice-involved Veterans. They are a direct point of contact for you to learn more about what benefits you qualify for, assist you with applying for those benefits, and refer you to other organizations and resources that will help you with your specific needs. To find your local Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinator, please call VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

## Fugitive Felon Program (FFP)

The VA is prohibited from providing or continuing to provide health care and services, including medications and any care provided in the community, at VA expense to Veterans and beneficiaries identified as fugitive felons. A Fugitive Felon is defined as a person who is:

1. Fleeing to avoid custody or confinement after conviction for an offense which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person is fleeing, or for an attempt to commit such an offense; and/or
2. Fleeing to avoid prosecution for an offense which is a felony; and/or
3. Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for committing a felony under Federal or State law.

### Termination of VA Health Care Benefits

The VA will mail a letter to the Veteran or beneficiary identified as a fugitive felon to inform them of their status and termination of all VA health care benefits. The VA staff will take appropriate steps to transition the fugitive felon's health care from VA programs to alternative care outside the VA health care system. The VA cannot pay for any of this alternative care. In addition, VA will bill the Veteran and/or beneficiaries for all VA provided care received while in this fugitive felon status.

### Resolving Fugitive Felon Status

Persons identified as a fugitive felon must contact the Originating Agency that issued a felony warrant, **not the VA Police**, if it is believed:

1. An error was made, such as mistaken identity.
2. The warrant should be cancelled.
3. The warrant has been satisfied by your arrest or surrender.
4. There are other reasons, which would resolve the warrant.

Evidence that the warrant has been satisfied should be provided to your local VA regional office. For additional information concerning the Fugitive Felon Program, please contact the Fugitive Felon Coordinator or Enrollment Coordinator at your local VA medical care facility or contact VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

## The VA exceeds hiring goal of mental health providers by the thousands

The VA recently surpassed its original goal to hire mental health providers by more than 1,000, through the Mental Health Hiring Initiative, which aims to achieve higher standards of access and quality care. Since 2017, VA has filled nearly 4,000 mental health positions nationwide, which provides nearly 120,000 more Veterans access to high-quality mental health services each year, including those in underserved and rural regions of the country. Some of the success can be attributed to the VA hosting its first-ever external virtual trainee hiring fair, where 74 mental health professionals completed training and accepted positions at VA facilities. The department is currently planning a second, internal virtual-trainee hiring event focused on connecting, matching and retaining current VA psychology trainees and placing them into vacant positions at VA facilities. Staff were also empowered to develop facility-specific hiring and retention plans, which enabled them to hire as vacancies opened. Many facilities used national hiring announcements offering loan repayment and other incentives for attracting mental health professionals. To learn more about VA health care employment opportunities and hiring events, visit: [www.VAcareers.va.gov](http://www.VAcareers.va.gov).



**GRANDPARENTS DAY**  
*Sunday, September 8th*

# The History of the Erie Canal



The Erie Canal is a 363-mile waterway that connects the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean via the Hudson River in upstate New York. The channel, which traverses the State of New York from Albany to Buffalo on Lake Erie, was considered an engineering marvel when it first opened in 1825.

Early explorers in America had long searched for a water route from East Coast population centers to the resource-rich lands of the Midwest and Great Lakes. The Northwest Territory—which later would become the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin—had timber, minerals, furs and fertile land for farming, but the Appalachian Mountains stood in the way. Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, it took weeks to reach these resources overland. Bulk transportation of goods was limited by what teams of oxen could pull by wagon. The lack of an efficient transportation network confined populations and trade to coastal areas.

Beginning in 1807, Jesse Hawley—a flour merchant from western New York who went broke trying to get his product to market in the Atlantic coastal cities—published a series of essays from debtor's prison. In them, Hawley advocated for a canal system that would span nearly 400 miles from Buffalo, New York, on the eastern shore of Lake Erie, to Albany, New York, on the Hudson River. Hawley's eloquent essays caught the attention of New York politicians, including New York City mayor DeWitt Clinton. Clinton believed that the canal was crucial to the economic advancement of his city. Clinton saw his plan come to fruition in 1817 after he became the governor of New York. Workers first broke ground on the Erie Canal on July 4, 1817, near Utica, New York.



The construction of the Erie Canal, through mountainous terrain and dense rock proved as challenging as the political environment. Throughout construction, Dewitt Clinton's political opponents ridiculed the project as "Clinton's Folly" or "Clinton's ditch." It took canal laborers—some Irish immigrants, but most U.S.-born men—eight years to finish the project. They cleared the land by hand and animal power and blasted through rock with gunpowder. The original Erie Canal was just four feet deep and 40 feet wide, though it was considered a major engineering feat at the time of its completion in 1825. It traversed nearly 400 miles of fields, forests, and rocky cliffs, and contained 83 locks—structures used for raising and lowering boats between canal stretches with different water levels. Project engineers had little experience building canals. The military academy at West Point in New York offered the only formal engineering program in North America at the time the Erie Canal was built.

The Erie Canal opened on October 26, 1825. A fleet of boats, led by Governor Dewitt Clinton aboard the *Seneca Chief* sailed from Buffalo to New York City in record time—just ten days. The canal transformed New York City into the commercial capital it remains today. Prior to the canal's construction, the ports of Boston, Philadelphia and New Orleans outranked New York in size. But the construction of the Erie Canal gave New York City (via the Hudson River) direct water access to the Great Lakes and regions of the Midwest. As the gateway to these resource-rich lands, New York soon became the nation's economic epicenter and the primary port of entry to the United States for European immigrants. New York City's population quadrupled between 1820 and 1850. Financing of the Erie Canal's construction allowed the city to eclipse Philadelphia as the country's most important banking center. The canal fostered a population surge in western New York and opened regions farther west to settlement.

The Erie Canal was enlarged twice to fit wider and deeper boats. Some parts were rerouted to make way for more ship traffic in 1918. Portions of the original canal are still operable, though tourism is now the main source of boat traffic along the Erie Canal. Commercial and shipping traffic declined abruptly after the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. The new waterway along the United States-Canadian border allowed large ships to enter the Great Lakes directly from the Atlantic Ocean, bypassing the Erie Canal. In 2000, Congress designated the Erie Canal a National Heritage Corridor to help preserve New York State's historic waterway and the communities along its banks.





Appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with our Veterans Benefits Counselors. You can call 803-785-8400 to schedule an appointment. Please allow 48 hours for a return call.

## Reminder

### 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.

The office would like to thank Art Cavanaugh and Gloria "Jane" Usher. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of July & August.



**THANKS**



Monday, October 14th.

*Remember this is a Federal Holiday  
County offices will be open.*

### Did you know...

Any National Guard member or Reservist who is entitled to retired pay for non-regular service or, would be entitled to retired pay for non-regular service, now has Veteran status. To see if you qualify for any benefits, check with your local VA regional office.

### Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to your Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that is being deposited. If you are changing your direct deposit, you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.



**All Lexington County  
Offices will be closed on  
the following days:**

**Monday, September 2nd  
for Labor Day**



## The VA launches new health care options under the MISSION Act

The VA launched its new and improved Veterans Community Care Program on June 6, 2019, implementing portions of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (MISSION Act), which both ends the Veterans Choice Program and establishes a new Veterans Community Care Program. The MISSION Act will strengthen the nationwide VA Health Care System by empowering Veterans with more health care options. Under the new Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on new criteria. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care. Veterans may elect to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1 - A Veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.

2 - A Veteran lives in a US state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the US territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the US Virgin Islands.

3 - A Veteran qualifies under the “grandfather” provision related to distance eligibility under the Veterans Choice Program.

4 - The VA cannot furnish care within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below:

A - Drive time to a specific VA medical facility

\* - Thirty-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and non-institutional extended care services.

\* - Sixty-minute average drive time for specialty care.

(Please note: Drive times are calculated using geo-mapping software.)

B - Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility

\* - Twenty days from the date of request for primary care, mental health care and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.

\* - Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or VA health care provider.

5 - The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.

6 - The VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with the VA’s standards for quality based on specific conditions.

In preparation for this landmark initiative, senior VA leaders will visit more than 30 VA hospitals across the country to provide in-person support for the roll-out.

The VA MISSION Act:

- Strengthens the VA’s ability to recruit and retain clinicians.
- Authorizes “Anywhere to Anywhere” telehealth across state lines.
- Empowers Veterans with increased access to community care.
- Establishes a new urgent care benefit that eligible Veterans can access through the VA’s network of urgent care providers in the community.

The VA serves approximately 9 million enrolled Veterans at 1,255 health care facilities around the country every year. For more information, visit [www.missionact.va.gov](http://www.missionact.va.gov).



## WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with Veterans, and others who had helped with their annual Christmas wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America™, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. This nonprofit organization continues the Arlington tradition as part of its mission to Remember, Honor and teach.

In 2018, Wreaths Across America and our national network of volunteers laid over 1,400,000 memorial wreaths at nearly 1200 locations in the United States and beyond. We accomplished this with help from over 2800 fundraising groups, many corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. Our annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery is known as the world's largest Veteran's parade, stopping at schools, monuments, Veteran's homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.

Proceeds place a wreath at one of the participating cemeteries; help support our fundraising partners, educational and Veteran's services outreach. Please note that **all sponsorships are sent directly to the location and no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.**

We welcome all to join us at any Wreaths Across America ceremony. If you would like to participate or help bring sponsored wreaths to your local community, please contact us and we will help connect you with other groups already working in your area.

### Schedule of Events

#### Sunday, December 08, 2019

Start of World's Longest Veterans Parade from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery and participating locations

#### Monday, December 09, 2019 12:00 Noon at the SC Veterans Memorial

#### Located on the Assembly Street side of the Statehouse grounds

There will be State House wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and Puerto Rico

#### Saturday December 14, 2019 12:00 Noon

#### Fort Jackson National Cemetery, 4107 Percival Road, Columbia, SC 29229

Parking will be at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking lot across from the cemetery. We will have shuttle buses to bring you to and from the cemetery starting at 10:30am the morning of the ceremony. There will be limited handicap parking in the cemetery with proper identification.

For more information visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org), or call Carol Davis (803) 467-4482.  
You can also email [waajtjackson@gmail.com](mailto:waajtjackson@gmail.com).



# WREATHS *across* AMERICA

**2019**

## Wreath Sponsorship Form

\*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state, national Veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December. Wreaths may be purchased online at [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org). Please use Cemetery Code SCFJNC and Organization Code SC0015.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
**Wreaths Across America TM**  
 PO Box 3356  
 West Columbia, SC 29171  
 Questions? Please call 803-467-4482  
 Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us  
 in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA FORT JACKSON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

**WHEN USING THIS FORM, FOR EVERY 2 WREATHS SPONSORED, WAA WILL DONATE 1 FREE WREATH.**

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card= If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths	\$1,500.00		
		<b>Grand Total</b>	

**\*\*SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS\*\***

**In Honor of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide email of "In Honor Of" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (if you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing: \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and **no** wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: SCFJNC Fundraising Group ID: SC0015

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Cash \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Total\$: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # Checks: \_\_\_\_\_

Reconciled: \_\_\_\_\_

MO \$: \_\_\_\_\_

GEN: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lexington County Veterans Group

All Honorably Discharged 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.

On the second Tuesday of each month, they meet at a different local restaurant for food and fellowship. Check their website for the location.

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.



## ***Veteran Wives Support Group***

***Meets 1st Friday of each month***

***2 to 4pm***

***Crossroads Counseling Center***

***130A Whiteford Way***

***Lexington, SC 29072***

*For further information, please visit their website at  
[lex-coveteransgroup.com](http://lex-coveteransgroup.com) or  
contact our office at 803-785-8400.*



## ***Dang-it Dolls Workshops***

Saturday, September 14th & Saturday, October 12th  
from 10am to 2pm

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

The Lodge Brothers will be preparing their famous Hot Dog Lunch for everyone.

***Come for an hour, or spend the day. All help is appreciated.***

***If you are a student, and need community service hours for class credit,  
please keep us in mind.***

***After the October workshop, there will only be one other workshop in 2019.***

***This will be held on Saturday, November 9th.***

***There will be NO WORKSHOP in December.***

Grab a friend and come join in with the stuffing and decorating of the dolls so we can bring smiles and stress relief to our service men and women.

To date, with your help, we have shipped over 200,000 Dang-it Dolls all over the world.

We have volunteers ranging in age from 5 years to 90 years old.

There is something for everyone to do and this is the one place where

***THE MORE THE MERRIER***

really counts.





## List of Common Allowable (Recurring) Medical Expenses for an Initial Claim Application

The list below shows recurring VA allowable medical expenses for the initial claim application for pension benefits. The list is not all-inclusive and must be unreimbursed by insurance. They must be paid for by the applicant and are used to reduce income that exceeds the VA income limit.

1. Medicare Part B Premiums
2. Medicare Part D Premiums
3. Insurance Premiums for supplemental medical insurance
4. Home Health Services
5. Assisted Living Facility Services
6. Nursing Home Services
7. Long Term Care Insurance
8. Medical Monitoring Program (like Life Alert)



There is a new number to call for billing issues through the VAMC for any private health care that was fee based out. That number is 1-877-881-7618 9am to 5pm EST.



## SC Hunting and Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

Residents of SC may apply for a disability license by mail or in person at a DNR Regional Office. Offices are located in Columbia, Charleston, Clemson, Florence, York, and DNR at the Market, located at the SC State Farmer's Market in West Columbia. In order to qualify for a disability license you must be declared disabled and receiving disability benefits from one of the following agencies:

- Federal Civil Service
- Medicaid or Railroad Retirement
- SC State Retirement System
- Social Security Administration
- Veterans Affairs (the VA)



In order to qualify for a Disability license you must have been a SC resident for 365 days. DNR must have a completed application, a photocopy of your SC driver's license or SC state issued ID card and current proof (dated within the past 12 months) stating you are disabled and receiving benefits.

The license will be valid for 3 years and includes privileges of hunting, big game, WMA permit, migratory waterfowl permit and fresh and saltwater fishing.

For more information, you can contact DNR at 803-734-3833 or by visiting their website at [dnr.sc.gov/regs/pdf/disabilitylicense.pdf](http://dnr.sc.gov/regs/pdf/disabilitylicense.pdf).

## Did You Know...



**Veterans can obtain advance directives through the Dorn VAMC. For more information contact Cheryl Geddings at 776-4000 ext. 4084.**



# Happenings Around Lexington County

## During the Months of September & October

Saturday, August 31st  
through  
Monday, September 2nd

Chapin Labor Day Festival & Parade  
For more information visit their website at  
[chapinsc.com/visitors/festivals&events](http://chapinsc.com/visitors/festivals&events).



Starts on  
Friday, September 13th

Deceased Farms in Lexington (corn maze, etc.)  
382 Olde Farm Road, Lexington  
Thursday through Sunday nights  
For more information visit their website at  
[deceasedfarm.com](http://deceasedfarm.com) or call them @ 803-530-9434.



Friday, September 27th  
through  
Saturday, September 28th

Irmo Okra Strut  
For more information visit their website at  
[irmookrastrut.com](http://irmookrastrut.com) or call them @ 803-781-7050.



Saturday, October 5th

Gaston Collard & BBQ Festival  
For more information visit their website at  
[gastonsc.org](http://gastonsc.org) or call them @ 803-796-7725.



Wednesday, October 9th  
through  
Sunday, October 20th

SC State Fair  
For more information visit their website at  
[scstatefair.org](http://scstatefair.org) or call them @ 803-779-3387.



Starts on  
Saturday, October 12th

Gilbert House of Terror  
739 Harley Taylor Road  
Friday & Saturday nights with some Sunday nights  
For more information visit their website at  
[gilberthouseofterror@gmail.com](mailto:gilberthouseofterror@gmail.com)  
or call them @ 803-892-5396.



Friday, October 18th  
through  
Wednesday, 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](http://riverbanks.org/events/boo-at-the-zoo).



October is... Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
[www.NationalDayCalendar.com](http://www.NationalDayCalendar.com)



All Patient Advocate extensions go to one central line, 803-776-4000 ext. 6937.

If you need to speak to a patient advocate, use extension 5933. This is for the Patient Advocate check-in area.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The logo for the South Carolina State Fair's 150th anniversary. It features the words "SOUTH CAROLINA" in a curved font at the top, a small palmetto tree icon, and "STATE FAIR" in large, stylized white letters. A circular emblem to the right contains "150 YEARS" in red and white. The background is a blue field with white stars.

**STATE FAIR** 150 YEARS

**OCTOBER 9 - 20, 2019**

**Military members have free admission to the SC State Fair every day.**

*This is active duty and retired military and their dependents with proper ID!*

**Please help us spread the word.**

*If you would like social media graphics, please contact [kathya@scstatefair.org](mailto:kathya@scstatefair.org).*

**The SC State Fair plans to honor a veteran every day of the fair.**

*Jim Hudson Automotive is partnering with us for this 5:30 pm daily ceremony, near the Rocket.*

*To nominate a veteran, go to:  
[jimhudson.com/salute-to-veterans](http://jimhudson.com/salute-to-veterans)*

**We are looking for volunteers to help with the veteran's ceremony – folding of the flag, singing the Star Spangled Banner, playing patriotic music.**

*If you have volunteers (free admission and parking) to help us – please contact Kathy Allen, [kathya@scstatefair.org](mailto:kathya@scstatefair.org).*

# Pension Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has two types of pension programs: Non-service connected pension (NSCP) which is for Veterans and Survivors pension (also called death pension) for surviving spouses and un-remarried children (certain criteria apply/see below). Both pension benefits help Veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income. Pension benefits are tax-free monetary benefits payable to low-income Veterans, surviving spouses and certain un-remarried children.

## ***Pension for Veterans***

### **Eligibility**

Generally, a Veteran must have at least 90 days of continuous active duty service, with at least one day during a wartime period (see below for wartime periods) to qualify for a VA Pension. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least one day during a wartime period, and was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions. In addition to meeting minimum service requirements, the Veteran must be:

1. Age 65 or older, OR
2. Totally and permanently disabled, OR
3. A patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care, OR
4. Receiving Social Security Disability Insurance, OR
5. Receiving Supplemental Security Income

### **Income Requirements**

The VA uses your total family income and net worth to determine if you meet the income requirements for the benefit. Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the NSCP benefit. Currently, the 2019 amount for NSCP is \$13,535/year for a single Veteran and \$17,724/year for a Veteran and spouse. The VA recently changed the way they assess net worth to make the pension entitlement rules more clear. Net worth is the total of your or beneficiary's assets and annual income. Your net worth also includes the net worth of your spouse. You should report all of your net worth. The net worth limit to qualify for a Veterans Pension as of December 1, 2018 is \$127,061. In the future, the net worth limit will increase by the same percentage as Social Security cost-of-living increases.

### **Additional Veteran Pension Allowances**

Veterans who are eligible for VA pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person, may be eligible for an additional monetary payment. If the Veteran's spouse needs aid and attendance, the costs of their care may also be used to lower the combined income and grant benefits.

## ***Survivors Pension***

### **Eligibility**

The deceased Veteran must have met the following service requirements:

1. For service on or before September 7, 1980, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days of continuous active military service, with at least one day during a war time period.(see below for wartime periods)
2. If he or she entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally he or she must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty with at least one day during a war time period.
3. Was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.
4. Must be married to the Veteran at the time of their death and be un-remarried since their death.

While an un-remarried spouse is eligible at any age, a child of a deceased wartime Veteran must be:

1. Under 18, OR
2. Under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, OR
3. Permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18

Continued on page 21

## **Pension Benefits Continued from page 20**

### **Income Requirements**

The VA uses your total family income and net worth to determine if you meet the income requirements for the benefit. Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the survivors benefit. Currently, the 2019 amount for survivors pension is \$9,078/year for a surviving spouse and \$11,881/year for a surviving spouse with one dependent.

The VA recently changed the way they assess net worth to make the pension entitlement rules more clear. Net worth is the total of your or beneficiary's assets and annual income. You should report all of your net worth. The net worth limit to qualify for a Veterans Pension as of December 1, 2018 is \$127,061.

### **Additional Survivors Pension Allowances**

Surviving spouses or un-remarried children who are eligible for survivors pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person may be eligible for an additional monetary payment.

### ***Housebound/Aid and Attendance Benefits***

**These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, and they are not paid without eligibility to pension benefits first.** Since Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances increase the pension amount, people who are not eligible for a basic pension due to excessive income may be eligible for pension at these increased rates. A Veteran or surviving spouse may not receive Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time. The current 2019 amounts for Housebound are \$16,540/year for a single Veteran; \$20,731/year for a Veteran and spouse; \$11,095/year for a surviving spouse; and \$13,893/year for a surviving spouse with one dependent. The 2019 rates for Aid and Attendance are \$22,577/year for a single Veteran; \$26,766 for a Veteran and spouse; \$14,509/year for a surviving spouse; and \$17,309 for a surviving spouse with one dependent.

The *Housebound* increased monthly pension amount may be added to your monthly pension amount when you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of permanent disability.

The *Aid & Attendance (A&A)* increased monthly pension amount may be added to your monthly pension amount if you meet one of the following conditions:

1. You require the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting yourself from the hazards of your daily environment
2. You are bedridden, in that your disability or disabilities requires that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment
3. You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity
4. Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less

To apply for increased pension based on Housebound or A&A payments, you will need to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's report, that validates the need for an increased benefit or complete VA Form 21-2680 "Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need For Regular Aid and Attendance".

### **Eligible Wartime Periods**

Under current law, the VA recognizes the following wartime periods to determine eligibility for VA Pension benefits:

1. Mexican Border Period (May 9, 1916 – April 5, 1917 for Veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders, or adjacent waters)
2. World War I (April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918)
3. World War II (December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946)
4. Korean conflict (June 27, 1950 – January 31, 1955)
5. Vietnam era (February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975)
6. Gulf War (August 2, 1990 – through a future date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

Continued on page 22

## Pension Benefits continued from page 21

### How To Apply

To apply for Veterans Pension, you can download and complete VA Form 21P-527EZ, "Application for Pension" from the VA website. To apply for Survivors Pension, you can download and complete VA Form 21-534EZ, "Application for DIC, death pension, and/or accrued benefits" from the VA website. That website is: [www.va.gov/forms](http://www.va.gov/forms). You may also contact our office directly and we can mail, fax, or email you a packet on the specific benefit. This packet includes all the forms needed to submit the claim, along with a checklist of all supporting documentation for the claim.



### Ham-Cheddar Cheese Ball

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 pound thinly sliced deli ham
- 1/2 medium onion, cut into wedges
- 2 cups finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, cubed
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 slice Swiss cheese
- Assorted crackers

#### Directions

1. Place ham and onion in a food processor; pulse until finely chopped. Add cheddar cheese; pulse until blended. Add cream cheese; process until smooth.
2. Shape cheese mixture into a football; press pecans into cheese mixture. Wrap in plastic; refrigerate at least 1 hour.
3. Cut cheese into strips; arrange over top for laces. Serve with crackers.

**SEPTEMBER IS  
NATIONAL  
BISCUIT  
MONTH!**



**OCTOBER IS  
NATIONAL  
CHEESE  
MONTH!**

### Tidbits from the VARO and VAMC

- The toll free fiduciary 800 number will transfer to the VA National call center number as of September 30, 2019. That number will now be the 1-800-827-1000.
- The National Call center in Columbia has hired 36 new positions for a total of 162 positions.
- If a Veteran has not filed a claim with the VA regional office in five years, their claims folder is returned to the Records Management Center.
- The Records Management Center is in the process of scanning all records to comply with VA standards.

**Happy  
Halloween**

# RUN & WALK TO HONOR OUR BRAVEST

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF 9/11 HERO, FIREFIGHTER  
STEPHEN SILLER, TO ENSURE THAT WE NEVER  
FORGET AND HONOR THE SACRIFICES OF OUR FIRST  
RESPONDERS AND MILITARY HEROES.

**FRIDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
7:00 PM**

**COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN  
CONVENTION CENTER**

**1101 LINCOLN ST  
COLUMBIA, SC 29201**



**Tunnel to Towers  
5K RUN & WALK  
SOUTH CAROLINA**

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL: [SC@TUNNEL2TOWERS.ORG](mailto:SC@TUNNEL2TOWERS.ORG)



 **LEXINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER**

**REGISTER NOW      T2TRUN.ORG      #T2TRUN**

All proceeds will benefit the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation and its programs.  
Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation is recognized as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Fall Begins, Monday, September 23rd



Coming in the Next Issue...

Death/Burial benefits, Travel Pay, & Apportionments.

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.

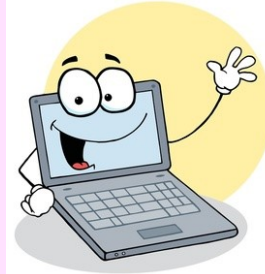


Gaston/Swansea Outreach is the 1st Thursday of the month at the Gaston Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

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

There will be no outreach in Gaston or Chapin during the month of September or in Chapin for the month of October.

DID YOU KNOW...



Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters.

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.



About Our Office

On March 22, 1945 the SC General Assembly adopted a bill creating a VA office in each of the state's 46 counties. The Lexington County VA Director is appointed by the Lexington County delegation. 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 for 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. Our office also provides off-site appointments at three of the County libraries once a month and we can provide home visits on a case by case basis.

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.

Website





# **LEXINGTON COUNTY 17th Annual VETERAN'S PARADE**

Sunday, November 3, 2019

\*\*\*\*Rain date November 10, 2019\*\*\*\*

Main Street and South Lake Drive  
Downtown Lexington

**PARADE BEGINS AT 3:00 PM  
(No entry fee)**

***HONORING THE AMERICAN LEGION  
POST # 7 AND LEGION AUXILIARY  
100th ANNIVERSARY***

**SPONSORED BY:  
TOWN OF LEXINGTON  
AMERICAN LEGION POST 7  
VFW POST 8738  
KIRBY FLOATS  
THOMPSON RENTAL  
LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
Thank you to all of these sponsors**

For more information contact:  
Sharon Willis 785-1454  
Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office 785-8400  
Kirby Floats 359-3134  
Thompson Rental 957-9680

**2019 Lexington County Veteran's Parade Application**  
**Sunday, November 3rd, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Rain date will be Sunday, November 10th, 2019**

**NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 25th, PLEASE**  
**(IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE GIVE ME A CALL, EVERYONE IS WELCOME IN THIS PARADE)**

PLEASE DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP AT HAYGOOD STREET 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 AT BUTLER 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.

-----

Group Name & Entry Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Applications To:  
Lexington County Veterans Parade  
Attn: Sharon Willis  
212 South Lake Drive Ste 302  
Lexington SC 29072

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

**FAX APPLICATIONS TO 803-785-8300**  
Applications can be emailed to you also. Contact Sharon at [swillis@lex-co.com](mailto:swillis@lex-co.com)

**I WILL DO MY BEST TO PLACE YOU IN THE LINEUP THAT SHOWCASES YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT. ONCE THE LINE UP 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 AT BUTLER STREET. PLEASE DO NOT ENTER FROM COLUMBIA AVENUE OR MAIN. PLEASE TAKE CAUTION AT THE ONE WAY STREET ON NORTH AND SOUTH CHURCH STREET. TURNING FLOATS AND TRAILORS AROUND IS VERY DIFFICULT. HAYGOOD STREET MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE LINEUP. MAIN STREET WILL BE CLOSED DOWN AT 2:45 SO PLEASE ARRIVE AT YOUR LOCATION BY 2:30.**

***THANK YOU FOR WANTING TO BE A PART OF THIS PARADE.***  
***SHARON***

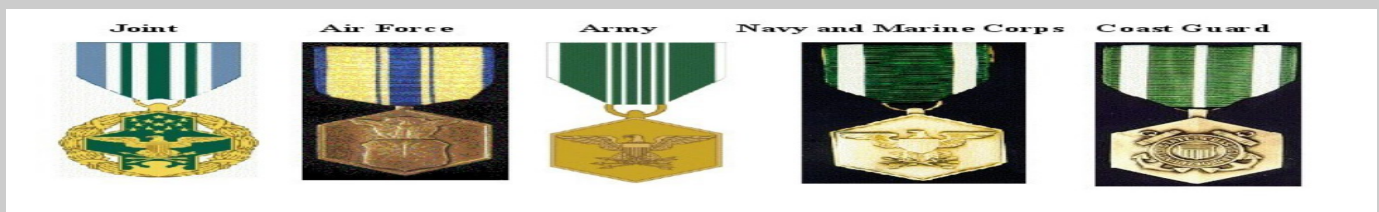
**ALL OF THE VETERANS APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AND THEY THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

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

**FOR EVERYONES SAFETY, THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON REQUESTS; PLEASE DO NOT THROW CANDY DURING THE PARADE. IT CAN BE HANDED OUT IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE WALKING WITH YOUR GROUP TO DO THIS. THANK YOU**

# ***Featured Medal:***

## ***Commendation Medals***



The Commendation Medal is a mid-level United States military decoration which is presented for sustained acts of heroism or meritorious service. For valorous actions in direct contact with an enemy, but of a lesser degree than required for the award of the Bronze Star Medal, the Commendation Medal with a "V" Device or Combat "V" may be authorized for wear on the service and suspension ribbon of the medal. Each branch of the United States Armed Forces issues its own version of the Commendation Medal, with a fifth version existing for acts of joint military service performed under the Department of Defense. The Commendation Medal was originally only a service ribbon and was first awarded by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard in 1943. An Army Commendation Ribbon followed in 1945, and in 1949, the Navy, Coast Guard, and Army Commendation ribbons were renamed the "Commendation Ribbon with Medal Pendant." By 1960, the Commendation Ribbons had been authorized as full medals and were subsequently referred to as Commendation Medals.

The Army Commendation Medal is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States other than General Officers who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S. Army after December 6, 1941, distinguished themselves by heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service. The medal may be awarded to a member of the Armed Forces of a friendly foreign nation who, after 1 June 1962, distinguishes themselves by an act of heroism, extraordinary achievement, or significant meritorious service which has been of mutual benefit to the friendly nation and the United States.

After the First World War, the Department of the Navy authorized the Navy Commendation Star as an attachment to the World War I Victory Medal. The star was identical to the Silver Citation Star, but not comparable, as the later recognized heroic combat actions, while the Navy Commendation Star denoted those who had been cited for meritorious achievement by the Secretary of the Navy. An independent Navy Commendation Ribbon was established in November 1943, designated as the Navy Commendation Medal in September 1960, and renamed the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal in 1994, this decoration is awarded by operational commanders, requiring the signature of an admiral or general officer in the grade of O-7. This allows for interpretation of the criteria for which the medal may be awarded. For instance, in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal is considered a somewhat higher decoration reserved for Department Head level officers at the O-4 level, senior Navy CPOs and senior Marine Corps NCOs at the E-8 and E-9 level and, following a full career, as a retirement award. In contrast, the awarding of the Army Commendation Medal in the U.S. Army and the Air Force Commendation Medal in the U.S. Air Force is not limited to senior service members, and can be awarded to junior NCOs in the grade of E-6 and below and junior officers in the grade O-3 and below. The U.S. Marine Corps has always been issued the Navy's commendation medal and there is not a separate commendation medal intended only for Marines. This lack of difference was recognized in 1994 when Secretary of the Navy John Howard Dalton changed the name of the Navy Commendation Medal to the *Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal*.

The U.S. Coast Guard awards a separate Coast Guard Commendation Medal, with a ribbon similar in design to that of its Navy and Marine Corps counterpart. Initially established as the Coast Guard Commendation Ribbon in 1947, it was re-designated as the Coast Guard Commendation Medal in 1959. Criteria for its award has paralleled that of the Navy and Marine Corps.

The U.S. Air Force began issuing its own Air Force Commendation Medal in 1958 with additional awards denoted by oak leaf clusters. Prior to this time, USAF recipients received the Army Commendation Medal. It was not until 1996 that the "V" device was authorized on the Air Force Commendation Medal; prior to 1996, there was not a valor distinction in effect for the Air Force Commendation Medal.

The last of the Commendation Medals is the Joint Service Commendation Medal, which was created in 1963. This award is intended for senior service on a joint military staff and is senior in precedence to service-specific Commendation Medals. As such, it is worn above the service Commendation Medals on a military uniform. As a joint award, multiple awards are denoted with an oak leaf cluster regardless of service.