



TELEPHONE: (803) 359-8400
FAX: (803) 808-2105

VET NEWS

February 2004

605 WEST MAIN STREET
SUITE 101
LEXINGTON, S.C. 29072

TUITION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN OF CERTAIN WAR VETERANS

Children of certain wartime veterans may be admitted to any state-supported college or university or technical college without being charged for tuition.

The veteran must have:

- (1) served honorably in a branch of the military during a war period, and
- (2) been a resident of SC at the time of entry into military service and during military service, or been a resident of SC for a period of one year and still resides here.

Further, the veteran must have:

- (1) been killed in action
- (2) died from other causes while in military service
- (3) died of disease or disability resulting from service
- (4) been a prisoner of war
- (5) been determined to be permanently and totally disabled as determined by the VA
- (6) been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor
- (7) been awarded the Purple Heart
- (8) been designated as missing in action
- (9) qualified as the child of a deceased veteran who was a POW or was permanently and totally disabled at the time of death.

The child must be:

- (1) approved by the SC Office of Veterans Affairs
- (2) 26 years of age or younger
- (3) pursuing any type of undergraduate degree
- (4) be a student in good standing

Application forms are available from the VA office.



Robert Nix, SC Department Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, presents a travel assistance check to Edward Locke, shown here with his daughter, Katharina. Locke was severely injured in a vehicle accident in Iraq last year.

D-DAY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

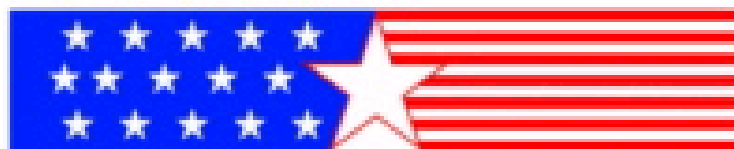
Plans are underway for ceremonies to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy (D-Day), June 6, 1944. Please check future newsletters for more details.

Keep the VA office informed of any activities scheduled by any organization to commemorate this event so we can include it in the newsletter.

WORLD WAR II MONUMENT DEDICATION

The long-awaited dedication of the World War II monument on the Mall in Washington, DC will be held on Saturday, May 29, 2004.

Several organizations have plans for bus or train trips for veterans and their families to attend the activities. If you are interested in attending, please



contact the VA office ASAP to get a reservation.

The National World War II Memorial will be the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during World War II. The memorial will honor all military veterans of the war, the citizens on the home front, the nation at large, and the high moral purpose and idealism that motivated the nation's call to arms. The Second World War will be the only 20th century event commemorated on the Mall's central axis.

Information on dedication activities is available by calling the memorial's toll free telephone number at 800-639-4992.

Members of the World War II generation may be enrolled in the World War II Registry, a list of individual Americans who participated in the war effort. Any U.S. citizen who helped win the war, whether a veteran or someone on the home front, is eligible for the Registry.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 3 Outreach- Batesburg-Leesville
- Feb. 9-13 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans (Dorn VA Medical Center)
- Feb. 10 Outreach- Chapin
- Feb. 17 Outreach- Swansea
- Feb. 21 Veterans Formation
Bethlehem Baptist Church
- Mar. 5 Persian Gulf War Program (Dorn VA Medical Center)
- Apr Retirement Appreciation Day, Fort Jackson
- Apr. 26-30 National Volunteer Appreciation Week, (Dorn VA Medical Center)

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Last November, the VA office initiated outreach programs in Batesburg-Leesville, Chapin, and Swansea to be accessible to veterans in those areas. Office staff are in those three locations to meet with veterans and family members to discuss and complete applications for veterans benefits.

The response has been good in Batesburg-Leesville and Chapin but not in Swansea. Unless we start getting some response during the Swansea program, the Swansea segment will be discontinued. The next Swansea outreach program is scheduled for Tuesday, February 17.

Veterans or their family members may discuss their concerns or questions on a one-on-one basis with VA office staff.

VA MEDICAL CARE ELIGIBILITY

Veterans who have service-connected disability ratings or who are seeking medical care for their service-connected disabilities are in the highest priority to receive medical care at VA medical centers. In a press release dated January 2, 2004, Anthony Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs determined to place all service-connected veterans in the highest priority group to receive medical attention.

Also in the Category A for Mandatory Care are veterans who currently receive VA pension, including aid and attendance and housebound benefits, former prisoners of war, veterans receiving treatment for conditions resulting from exposure to Agent Orange or ionizing radiation, veterans from World War I, veterans receiving medicaid, and veterans with low income and net worth.

Please see the attached Eligibility Fact Sheet 2004 for eligibility requirements and income thresholds to determine new categories and rates.



Ann Smith, President of Blue Star Mothers of SC, talks with Roxanne Wilson and Libby Rauch at a recent meeting of the organization. Roxanne, wife of Congressman Joe Wilson, was presented a blue star banner with three stars, signifying 3 family members in the military.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Feb. 1 National Freedom Day
- Feb. 2 Groundhog Day
- Feb. 3 Sinking of USS Dorchester (1943)
- Feb. 12 Operation Homecoming (1973)
- Feb. 14 Valentine's Day
- Feb. 15 Sinking of USS Maine (1898)
- Feb. 16 Presidents Day
- Feb. 17 Purple Heart Day
- Feb. 29 Leap Year



HELP NEEDED

I was recently asked how an organization or individual can help a veteran or military service member. There's probably an infinite number of ways, but here's a few suggestions:

(1) Adopt a veteran currently serving- provide letters, care packages, call his/her family to let them know you're thinking of them, call the veteran. Remember their families also need our support.

(2) Contribute items to groups sending support to current military members- The Blue Star Mothers (808-6485) is one group which collects material to send overseas. Comfort items (toothpaste, toothbrushes, towelettes, mouthwash, etc.) or free time items (CDs, DVDs, new magazines or books, individually wrapped food items, etc.) are shipped periodically. Other groups may also be doing the same. They need the items plus postage or donations. Donations can be received at the VA office.

(3) Needy veterans- some of our veterans suffer from medical or financial crises. They can use telephone calls, personal visits, and assistance with food, medical or living expenses. Contact the VA office if you would like to assist.

(4) Homeless veterans- Providence Home, Salvation Army, Veterans Formation.



A family of Iraqis receiving Christmas gifts provided by the Blue Star Mothers.

Below- Some of America's finest as they receive Christmas gifts provided by the Blue Star Mothers of SC. Photos provided by Janet Parsons.



YELLOW RIBBONS- WHERE ARE THEY?

The yellow ribbons which appeared at the beginning of the Gulf War have largely vanished. The young men and women serving throughout the world need to know that we appreciate their service to our great country. The yellow ribbons and blue star banners are an excellent way for families and friends to let these young people know that we are constantly thinking of them and their sacrifices.

The below article is reprinted from Sitnews, Ketchikan, Alaska:

Tie A Yellow Ribbon... Show Your Support

by M.C. Kauffman
April 02, 2003

Ketchikan, AK - Bright yellow ribbons are being displayed across our country and in Ketchikan. Just look around and you might see yellow ribbons hanging from a front door, from a mailbox, from a fence, or wrapped around a tree. And why all these yellow ribbons?

Yellow ribbons are symbols of hope for the safe return of our troops from the war in Iraq and show support for our American troops. Yellow ribbons also express to the troops' wives and families that Americans care for their sons and daughters who are in service to our country.

The custom of tying yellow ribbons to welcome home those who have been away for a long time under adverse or particularly difficult circumstances, such as war, is a relatively new tradition. Debate still continues on just exactly how the yellow ribbon custom actually began. According to the late Gerald E. Parsons, a longtime librarian of the Folklife Reading Room of the Library of Congress and also the author of "How the Yellow Ribbon Became a National Folk Symbol", the custom didn't exist at all before 1981. It was then that the idea of displaying yellow ribbons to welcome home the 52 Americans held hostage by Iranian militants seemingly emerged from nowhere and took the country by storm. This tribute was said to be inspired by the popular song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree," a song which was composed in 1972 - which in turn



was inspired by an oral folktale circulating since the 1950s.

The 1972 lyrics of "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," and the folktale on which the lyrics were based, tell the story of the paroled convict's prospective homecoming - not that of a soldier stationed abroad. Similarly, the Iran hostage crisis involved civilians held captive on foreign soil as opposed to military personnel in combat. ...And now, 12 years later, yellow ribbons are displayed as a tribute to American forces sent back to the Gulf and Iraq to effect a "regime change."

OPERATION YELLOW RIBBON

Operation Yellow Ribbon, a project whose motto is "For All You Do," seeks to raise awareness concerning the men and women who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces and to acknowledge them for all they do for our country. The ultimate goal is to have a new US postage stamp issued to recognize the sacrifices of our servicemen and women.

If you support the issuance of the new stamp, please write Mr. Terrence W. McCaffrey, Manager, Stamp Development, US Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260-2437.

For further information, visit the project website at www.ausa4soldiers.com and click on "Yellow Ribbon."

U.S. PATRIOT BONDS

The Patriot Girls are promoting US Savings Bonds to support our troops fighting the war on terrorism. For more information, visit their website at www.usfreedombonds.com.



Santa Claus delivering Blue Star Mother packages to more of our troops.