

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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# VET NEWS

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## SOME LEXINGTON COUNTY VAN PASSENGER RULES

To better coordinate the available van drivers, we are asking you to schedule your Dorn VA Medical Center appointments **between the hours of 9:00 am. to 2:00 pm., Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday.**

The van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies, or to pick up and discharge passengers at designated pick-up points.

Passengers should not ask the driver to make side trips to take care of personal business.

markers have been added to the database. These are mostly private cemeteries. This addition brings the number of graves recorded in the locator to approximately 5 million. Those with maps are in VA national cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries, and Arlington National Cemetery for burials since 1999.

Beyond the 5 million records now available, approximately 1,000 new records are being added to the online database each day. The exact locations of veterans' gravesites in the remaining state veterans cemeteries also will be added. (*Vanguard*, July/ August 2006)

## DATES TO REMEMBER

5th	Lexington County Veterans Day Parade
10th	Veterans Day Parade, Columbia (Veterans Affairs Office Closed)
11th	Veterans Day
18 <sup>th</sup>	Post 8738 Garage Sale – 7:00 – 12:00 Chicken plates 11:00 to ?
23-24th	Office Closed for Thanksgiving

## MAPS ADDED TO ONLINE GRAVESITE LOCATOR

Finding the graves of more than 3 million veterans and dependents buried in national cemeteries is now even easier thanks to a new map feature added to the gravesite locator.

Someone looking for a gravesite can now go to [www.gravelocator.cem.va.gov](http://www.gravelocator.cem.va.gov), click on the burial location link, and a map of the national cemetery is displayed, showing the section where the grave is located. These maps of burial sections can be printed from home computers and at national cemetery kiosks (computer terminals).

In a related development, the cemeteries in which 1.9 million veterans have been buried with VA grave

## LOCAL BOY SCOUTS HELPING TO SEND SOME HOLIDAY CHEER

*The Midlands Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America is announcing a partnership with the Indian Waters Boy Scout Council to send popcorn to our service members away from home over the holidays. When ordering your popcorn this year, the scouts will be asking you to purchase an additional tin to be sent to our deployed troops. The Blue Star Mothers will be shipping the popcorn as part of their Christmas "WE CARE" packages.*

*In addition to the popcorn, Blue Star would like to encourage your church, civic organization, school or you as an individual to donate snack items, entertainment items and especially cards and letters to be included in their packages. A list of items can be found on the website. [www.bluestarmotherssc.com](http://www.bluestarmotherssc.com).*

**ADDRESSES FOR YOUR LOVED ONE  
CURRENTLY DEPLOYED CAN BE SENT TO  
[INFO@BLUESTARMOTHERSSC.COM](mailto:INFO@BLUESTARMOTHERSSC.COM) OR MAILED  
TO PO BOX 2364, LEXINGTON SC 29071 TO  
HAVE THEM ADDED TO THEIR MAILING LIST.**

## LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERAN'S PARADE

The annual Lexington County Veteran's Parade will be Sunday, November 5, 2006 at 2:30 p.m. (no entry fee). Route will come down North Lake Drive from Lexington Elementary School to the Veterans Monument on South Lake Drive.

**COME HELP HONOR OUR VETERANS!!**

### **Grand Marshalls: Tuskegee Airmen Association.**

Sponsored by: Lexington County Employee Committee, American Legion Post 7, VFW Post 8738, Lexington County Veterans Affairs, and Town of Lexington.

Contact Sharon Willis at 785-8121 or 237-9617 (after 5 p.m.), Gary Baker or Barbara O'Connor at 785-8400 or Bob Hall at 785-8349.



Volunteer drivers are still needed to transport disabled veterans to and from the Dorn VA Medical Center. If you are interested, come by the Veterans Affairs Office and pick up an application. All applicants must pass a physical and take a TB test at the Dorn VA Hospital to become a certified driver. Call Gary Baker at 785-8401 for more information.

## WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINES

Women are serving on the front lines in the war on terror in record numbers. Fifty-one women have been killed in Iraq and more than 370 wounded as of April, 2006, according to the Department of Defense.

More than 700 female VA employees have been called to active military service since 2001. Their stories are raw and emotional. Many shared similar fears, such as anxiety over the constant threat of attack. Nurses, social workers, and women veteran health managers struggled with the grim realities of treating combat casualties. All shared the hardships of separation from family and friends, and the lack of privacy or creature comforts.

Their commitment to service reflects the true character of the citizen soldier—duty, honor, country.

## EXPANSION OF TRICARE RESERVE SELECT IN 2006

Last spring, the military health care system began offering a premium-based, health plan for purchase by National Guard and reserve members who met several qualifications including being activated for contingency operations on or after September 11, 2001. The service plan must be for 90 consecutive days or more in support of a contingency operation. Within 90 days of leaving active duty the member must enter into a service agreement with his or her reserve component to serve in the selected reserve for at least one additional year.

As of March 24, more than 9,500 plans had been purchased under TRICARE Reserve Select covering more than 27,000 beneficiaries.

When purchased by a qualified member, TRICARE Reserve Select provides comprehensive health care coverage similar to TRICARE Standard and Extra for the member and his or her eligible family members.

TRICARE Reserve Select will become available for purchase by all members of the selected reserve when two new tiers of premium rates are added to the program. The current contingency program will be called Tier 1, where members are already paying 28 percent of the total premium cost. (2006 member premiums are \$81 per month for the member-only coverage and \$253 per month for member and family coverage.)

Tier 2 will be added for Selected Reserve members who certify that they meet certain qualifications such as being self-employed or eligible for unemployment compensation. Reserve members enrolled in Tier 2 will pay 50 percent of the total premium cost. Tier 3 is for selected reserve members who do not qualify for the first two tiers. The member pays 85 percent of the total premium cost in Tier 3.

To qualify for any of the three tiers, reserve members must execute a service agreement and maintain their status in the selected reserve. Coverage under Tiers 2 and 3 will be available after October 1, 2006.

## THANKSGIVING SQUARE

“... *It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God . . . to be grateful for his benefits.*” George Washington, 1789, the first Thanksgiving Proclamation

The Wall of Presidents at Thanks-Giving Square in Dallas, TX honors words expressed about Thanksgiving by American presidents over the past two centuries. Set in a grove of sweet gum trees in the Mediation Garden, the Wall of Presidents was dedicated in November 1991 by President George Bush.

The Glory Window, which forms the 60-foot-high ceiling of the Chapel of Thanksgiving, is one of the largest horizontally mounted stained-glass pieces in the World. The window symbolizes the blessing of the Divine descending to earth as well as the ascent of human praise and gratitude to God.



Each day the Great Bells of Thanksgiving ring out the importance of gratitude in our lives. Weighing 5,000 pounds with the bells shaped in the form of the American Liberty Bell, each has a different inscription from the Psalms at the base. These inscriptions give meaning to the three truths of gratitude: God loves us, we love God, we serve God singing. The bells strike the hour and peal at noon.

The Mediation Garden creates a green, restful oasis in the heart of the city. The slopes of the pathways hide the surrounding surface traffic. The waterfalls help mask traffic sounds, allowing visitors to become more relaxed. Seasonal plantings add a touch of color to the brilliant green of the grass. The crepe myrtle, live oak, sweet gum, and elm trees will live for generations.

The Thanksgiving Monoliths, formed from white Sierra granite, each weigh 15 tons. The monoliths honor the spirit and tradition of thanksgiving in the histories of the world, the United States, and Texas. Marking the outer limits of the Thanks-Giving Square site, each monolith bears four inspiring quotations representing many diverse histories and cultures.

The Wall of Praise tells the story of gratitude, from the very personal to the universal. Located in the Court of All Nations, the Wall of Praise exhibit includes the 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm and a large mosaic of Norman Rockwell's portrait of people of the world in prayer, *The Golden*

*Rule*, reflecting gratitude at home, in the nation, and in the world.

The Ring of Thanks and Circle of Giving are located in the Court of All Nations. The Ring of Thanks, made of aluminum covered in 23-carat gold leaf, has a diameter of 14 feet. Seven white granite stepping stones serve as a walkway through the ring, which is mounted within the gray granite Circle of Giving to remind the visitor of the complementary nature of thanks and giving.

The central courtyard is the crossroads for thousands of people who come to Thanksgiving Square from more than 100 countries each year. At the far side of the courtyard, steps lead to a bridge spanning 125 feet across the great fountain and the largest of the waterfalls. Leading to the Chapel of Thanksgiving, the bridge allows visitors to realize that any act of thanksgiving moves us beyond ourselves as we reach out to others.

A window with a glass etching of a dove graces the main entrance to the Chapel of Thanksgiving. Titled *The Spirit of Thanksgiving*, the window was designed by the famous English artist and glass engraver John Hutton, who said, “The dove is a symbol used throughout history to depict beauty, peace, hope, and thanksgiving.”

The curving shell of white marble aggregate symbolizes the ancient “spiral of life.” This shape suggests the infinite upward reach of the human spirit. The Chapel seats about 80 people and is acoustically ideal for choirs and musical performances.

The altar in the Chapel, an exact cube carved of Carrera marble, weighs 7,000 pounds. It rests on a base of Texas red granite. On the altar during special events are a Waterford crystal candle holder and a large Tyrone glass chalice, both gifts from the people of Ireland. The chalice contains prayer cards of thanksgiving placed there by visitors.

On the lower level of the grounds, the Hall of Thanksgiving and Exhibit Area are just off the central courtyard. The Hall of Thanksgiving tells the detailed story of the American Thanksgiving tradition and includes a copy of the first Thanksgiving proclamation, written in 1777 by Samuel Adams. The Texas, American, and world Thanksgiving traditions are set in a beautiful museum with pillared columns surrounded by a pool of running water.



### ITEMS REQUESTED BY TROOPS

Orange Listerine, Twizzlers, Slim Jims, Dried fruit (apples, raisins, bananas, pineapple, trailmix, etc.), Ziploc Bags (sandwich & one-gallon size), large Braun coffee filters, Teriyaki & Spicy beef jerky, small cereal multi-boxes, Old Spice brand body wash & clear gel deodorant, fingernail brush, hand sanitizers, Mike & Ike candy, Fruit Cups, Pop Tarts, chocolate, vanilla & tapioca pudding snack packs, tuna lunch packets, and **COOKIES—ANY KIND.**

You may drop your donations off at the Veterans Affairs Office at 605 W. Main Street in Lexington.

### NATIONAL HOME MILITARY FAMILY PROGRAM

The Military Family Program (previously referred to as the Military Assistance Initiative) is a program that allows for the admission of a child, or spouse and child, of an active duty soldier without regard to current VFW membership. This program is special because it meets the needs of a family during the period of deployment. This summer the National Home was pleased to welcome another family of a National Guard soldier deployed to Iraq. This young mother and her two children will receive your support at the National Home as her husband answers his call to duty.

The Veterans Family Program is a pilot program to serve the whole family; the veteran, spouse and children when established criteria are met. This program is special because it will help sustain the family at a critical period of transition during participation in Vocational Rehabilitation. The program will give support to the whole family during the veteran's training, affording them the greatest opportunity for success. The first family in this pilot program was admitted to the National Home in July. He served in both the Persian Gulf War and Iraq. He has a wife and three children.

If you know of a family or child in need, encourage them to call toll-free Referral Hotline at (800) 851-0238. Or they can write to the National Home or log on the website at [www.vfwnationalhome.org](http://www.vfwnationalhome.org) by clicking on "Referrals."

### THE SERVICEMAN'S WIFE

The serviceman's wife, like her civilian counterpart, must keep house, wash clothes, and shop for groceries. Like any other wife, she takes an active part in the local and civic activities of her community, such as church, scouting and PTA. But that's about where the similarity ends. The serviceman's wife is a rare and unique breed of woman. She has many good opportunities that other wives do not have. She also has responsibilities and hardships heaped upon her that other wives couldn't cope with. It seems as if ship or squadron departures suddenly trigger the gremlins into action that disrupt normally well-run households. The household appliances or the family car always seems to wait until the serviceman leaves on a deployment to break down. And the children suddenly develop problems that just didn't exist when "DAD" was home.

Yes, the serviceman's wife is unique in that she is a housewife, mother, father, and family manager all in one. She also plays an important and needed role in her husband's career in the service, whether it be short term or lifetime career. Her attitude toward and her understanding of her husband's part in the service can be a liability or an asset to him. How does the serviceman's wife do it? Simply, she understands her role, her inherent responsibility to other servicemen's wives and that she is indeed a part of the service. She feels the pride of belonging to the team and recognizes that she, too, is a representative of the service and the United States just as her husband is. There is no other woman in the world like the serviceman's wife. She is indeed unique! She is indeed rare!

Servicemen's wives, we salute you! For without you, this great service would not be what it is today!

### BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA & BLUE STAR MOTHERS "POPCORN FREEDOM TINS"

This Holiday Season the Indian Waters Council has teamed up with the Blue Star Mothers. Please support our Troops by giving a can of Trails-End popcorn this Holiday Season. Each popcorn order can be sent to a specific military personnel, provided the APO address is given.

You may order by coming by our office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Prices range from \$10 to \$50 with payment due at time of purchase.

The Cub Scout Troop Pack 99 will get credit for orders placed through the Veterans Affairs Office.

## **HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS/COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY PROGRAM**

- ◆ Health Care for Homeless Veterans/Compensated Work Therapy Program is an outreach program to assist veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to get their medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment needs met so that he/she can move forward in getting a job to support him/herself. The client enrolled is provided intensive weekly case management as well as linkage and referrals to needed services.
- ◆ Orientation Groups are held each Monday and/or Tuesday at 9 am in Room A243, Building 106 (except for federal holidays) at the VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC.
- ◆ After Orientation Group all interested veterans are provided the opportunity to sign a behavioral contract and begin participation in the program. The program is an Alcohol and Drug free program and each participant agrees to refrain from the use of substances while in the program.
- ◆ Each veteran is assigned a case manager who assists him/her to develop his/her treatment plan that will include the top three goals that he/she wants to address while in the program. Intensive case management is critical for the client to be successful.

## **HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAM**

The Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program is a new initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to identify through community outreach veterans who are homeless or at risk to become so in the future.

Through visits to local shelters, missions, soup kitchens and transitional housing centers, the HCHV program identifies and screens men and women veterans for eligibility for admission. In

order to be eligible, veterans must have an other than dishonorable discharge from one of the branches of the armed forces.

After the initial screening and assessment has determined if a veteran is eligible and favorable for admission, the program and the veteran work to establish an effective treatment plan.

HCHV treatment plans are geared to making area veterans suitable for re-entry into independent living. By providing treatment which includes medical care, dental care, psychiatric care, access to vocational training and access to transitional housing options, the HCHV program makes independent living a true possibility for the area's many homeless veterans—as well as for those veterans for whom independent living could at any moment be out of reach.

While the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program is primarily concerned with improving the lives and conditions of Midlands, Upstate and Pee Dee area at-risk veterans, it is also concerned with the community as a whole. Collaborative efforts and involvement with organizations like the Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless and the Women's Shelter ensure that the HCHV program helps homeless veterans as well as underprivileged women, children, and non-veterans.

For more information, call the Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program at 803-776-4000, Ext. 7697 or visit their office at Dorn VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC.

- About 1/3 of the adult male homeless population has served in the armed forces;
- 57% of all homeless veterans are African American or Hispanic;
- Almost all homeless veterans are male—only 2% are female;
- Approximately 40% of homeless veterans suffer from some form of mental illness;
- Slightly more than half of homeless veterans suffer from some form of substance abuse.

(Source: *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*)



### **CURRY FOR ALZHEIMERS?**

Intriguing studies suggest older adults from India may have a reduced risk for Alzheimer's. Researchers at VA's Spulveda, CA Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center have been focusing on dietary factors that fight inflammation in the brain and reduce beta-amyloid accumulation.

Curry, widely used in Indian cuisine, is one such anti-inflammatory. Its active ingredient, curcumin, gives curry its yellow color. It was found in a recent study that the substance reduced brain amyloid in mice and improved other disease-related factors.

A pilot trial is now underway to determine whether curcumin can do the same in Alzheimer's. The team is also looking into the protective potential of omega-3 fatty acids—"good" fats essential for the health of neurons and nerve synapses that fall prey to Alzheimer's. Their work showed that withholding omega-3 impaired memory in mice, while its supplementation preserved memory and reduced brain amyloid levels.

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### **NOVEMBER OUTREACH PROGRAM**

November 7<sup>th</sup> 8-12 Batesburg-Leesville  
November 14<sup>th</sup> 9-12 Chapin  
November 21<sup>st</sup> 8-12 Swansea

### **TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Lexington Main Office: 785-8400

### **VETERAN PHONE SCAM ALERT**

Returning veterans should be aware of a phone scam in the Midwest (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Michigan, and Minnesota). The

8400  
0231