

Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County



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VET NEWS

August 2007

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Aug. 1 st	AIR FORCE DAY
Aug. 2 nd	Operation Desert Shield (Persian Gulf) Began in 1990
Aug. 4 th	COAST GUARD DAY
Aug. 5 th	U S Entered Vietnam War (1964)
Aug. 7 th	PURPLE HEART DAY
Aug. 15 th	V-J DAY / WORLD WAR II (1945)

Half Staff

There are two days in the year when the American flag is to be displayed at half-staff: Peace Officers Memorial Day (May 15) and Memorial Day (last Monday in May).

- On Police Officers Memorial Day, the flag is flown at half-staff to remember those law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. The flag is to be flown at half-staff all day.
- Memorial Day recognizes the deaths of all veterans whenever they died. Flags are to be lowered to half-staff until 12 noon when they are to be raised to full staff.

The President has congressional authority to order flags to be lowered to half-staff on other important days, such as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (December 7th) or Patriot Day (September 11th).

The President or Governor also may order flags to be flown at half-staff for other special occasions. A proclamation is usually issued for those occasions detailing the reason and length of time to be flown at half-staff.

JOSHUA TORRENCE FIELD HOUSE DEDICATION

Friends of Joshua Torrence are raising funds to name the new field house at White Knoll High School on his behalf.

Josh was a member of the White Knoll High School football team prior to graduation. He joined the United States Marine Corps and was assigned to the 2nd Amphibian Assault Battalion, 2nd Marine Division.

Josh, who was killed while on patrol in Fallujah, Iraq on March 14, 2005, was the first graduate of White Knoll High School to die serving his country.

Plans are underway to name the field house for Josh at the annual White Knoll High School-Lexington High School football game in November.

Contact 1st Sgt. David Pelley at (803)996-4564 or see the attached flyer on purchasing a brick to make this dedication a reality.





Members of the Speedy Wilson Chapter of the Marine Corp League gather in front of the latest Marine Corp vehicle being utilized in Iraq – **the Cougar**.



BEHAVIORAL COUNSELORS FOR DORN

DORN VAMC has been approved for twenty-five new behavioral counselors to work with veterans with PTSD and other psychological issues. DORN has already hired a number of these counselors to deal primarily with Operation Enduring Freedom and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans. These counselors will fill a void in the system, which has seen a large number of veterans experiencing PTSD.

Veterans needing such counseling can contact their primary care physician at DORN VAMC. Veterans not in the VA medical care system need to complete an application to enroll. Check with your local VA office.

DORN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

The DORN VAMC now has a 24/7 Emergency Department. This is an emergency care facility only and will not provide after-hours non-emergency care.

If DORN VAMC is used for your primary medical care, advise your family members and/or EMT personnel that you wish to go to DORN VAMC for emergency treatment.

However, veterans needing immediate emergency care should advise family members and/or EMT personnel to take you to the *nearest* emergency medical facility.

Veterans must then notify DORN VAMC within 72 hours of admission that they have been treated in another facility. Dorn will contact the facility regarding any need for transfer to Dorn, payment for emergency services, etc.



SPECIAL EXPOSURE EXAMS

Veterans who have medical symptoms believed to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange, radiation, or asbestos while in service should request an exam at the DORN VAMC. This also applies to Gulf War veterans exposed to environmental hazards.

Go to the C&P office at DORN with your DD-214 or discharge papers and request that you be examined. If you are currently under medical care at DORN, ask your primary care physician to examine you for these conditions.

If the exam shows a diagnosis related to such exposure, contact the VA office to see about filing a claim for service-connected disability.

COLLECTION FOR CHRISTMAS SHIPMENT

Several veterans' organizations collect items to send to our troops for Christmas.

Generally, the troops need or want the following items:

DVDs, hand-held video games, orange Listerine, Twizzlers, Slim Jims, dried fruit (apples, raisins, bananas, pineapple, apricots, etc.), Ziploc bags (sandwich and one gallon size), large Braun coffee filters, teriyaki & spice 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.

Donors may contact our office for more details.

VAN STATISTICS

The VA Office acquired a van through the DAV van program in June 2006. Here are the van statistics from June 19, 2006-May 31, 2007:

Total Number of trips to Dorn VAMC - 140
Total Number of Passengers - 301
Total Number of Miles Driven - 9,883
Total Time Driven - 684 hours and 45 minutes
Total Number of Drivers - 6

Our van drivers **Bill Arndt, Craig Brandt, Ed Gavin, Roger Rucker, Stan Thornburgh, and Gary Baker** were honored at a luncheon on June 19th at the Flight Deck Restaurant. Each driver was presented certificates and mementos by the Dorn VA Medical Center, DAV, VA office, and donations from local supporters. Thanks to the six drivers who give up considerable time to serve their fellow veterans.

Also recognized was the staff of the Veterans Affairs Office who make the van program run smoothly.

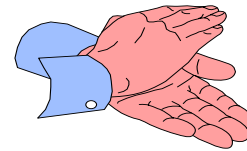


OFFICE NEWS

SHINING STAR- JENNIFER HENDRIX

Veterans Specialist Jennifer Hendrix was recognized by County Council at its June 26 meeting as a Shining Star. Jennifer was recognized for providing exceptional service to a veteran seeking benefits. Jennifer has been with the Veterans Affairs Office since December 2005.

Congratulations, Jennifer!



NEW EMPLOYEE- DEBBIE MYERS

Debbie Myers joined the VA Office staff in June as Veterans Clerk. She will be editing the newsletter and coordinating van transportation along with receptionist duties. Debbie is a native of Charleston and has lived in Lexington for 14 years. She is married to Dan Myers, an Army veteran of Vietnam. Debbie and Dan are the parents of six daughters, and five grandchildren. Her son-in-law, Captain Donald P. Smith, is currently serving in Iraq.

Welcome aboard, Debbie!

ARRIVAL OF NEW VAN DRIVER

Jim Bokanovich is our seventh volunteer van driver. Jim is learning the ropes and will take control of the wheel within the next few weeks. We are excited that he will be joining our team of very special volunteers!

Welcome Jim!



POST 174 BBQ FUNDRAISER

American Legion Post 174 will host a **BBQ chicken** dinner fundraiser on Sunday, August 12, 2007. A \$6.00 donation buys chicken, hash and rice, corn on the cob, string beans, and a drink. Desserts will also be available. Post 174 is located on Piney Woods Road, off Piney Grove Road in Irmo.

Call **Charlie Adkins at 755-0930** or **Wayne Atkins at 781-8303** prior to **August 5** for a reservation.

BURIAL DETAIL

COL Frank Whitlock of the SC State Guard briefed the July 2 Veterans Advisory Committee meeting concerning burial details provided by the State Guard. The State Guard has a burial detail that can fold the US flag, play Taps, and provide a rifle salute.

The military services are required to provide at least a two-member detail to fold the flag and present it to the next of kin and play Taps. Due to personnel restrictions, a larger detail to provide a rifle salute are reserved for retired or active duty members. The State Guard is a backup to traditional services with burial details, including the rifle detail, provided when available.

Any family wishing full military honors should request the funeral home to make arrangements. COL Whitlock can be reached at (803) 806-4238. SGM Lee of the SC National Guard can arrange funeral details for National Guard members or retirees. Contact him at (803) 806-4341.



STATE GUARD APPLICATIONS

The SC State Guard is an all-volunteer organization that is a backup to the National Guard. The State Guard has a mission to provide internal security, disaster relief, and protection from civil disorder. The State Guard serves under the Adjutant General of South Carolina.

To qualify for appointment to the SC State Guard, the requirements are:

- Seventeen (17) years of age with parent/guardian consent.
- A US citizen or a resident of South Carolina with intentions of becoming a US citizen.
- Meet height/weight standards
- Meet basic medical condition criteria. (Cannot have a medical condition that could cause injury to oneself or others.)
- No record of Drug or Alcohol abuse.
- An Honorable or General discharge from prior active or reserve military service.
- Cannot be a current member of an active or reserve component of the US Armed Forces.
- A high school diploma or GED and other acquired skills to be enlisted past the grade of private (E-1).
- An Associates Degree and special skills that are required by the State Guard to receive an appointment to Warrant officer or, if two years prior active service, to a commissioned officer.
- A Bachelors Degree to receive an appointment as a commissioned officer or have prior service as an officer.
- A clear police check with no felonious charges or excessive misdemeanors.

**Contact COL Frank Whitlock
at (803) 806-4238.**

NATIONAL GUARD INFORMATION

The National Guard is looking for prior service veterans between the ages of 17 and 42 who would like to be part of the SC National Guard. Prior service veterans with more than 5 years of service, who are older than 42, may also qualify. Contact SFC Jimmy Foley, 109-T Old Chapin Road, Lexington 29072, (803) 356-2340.

BLUE WATER NAVY ISSUES

As of the date of going to press for this issue, the VA has until Friday, July 20 to file an appeal brief on the Haas “Blue Water Navy” decision. Haas, a Blue Water Navy veteran, received a favorable rating at the Board of Veterans Appeals in August 2006, granting him service-connection for exposure to herbicides (Agent Orange) in Vietnam. The VA appealed that decision. The file brief expected by July 20 should be the last brief before the matter is adjudicated by the US Circuit Court.



I Am a Blue Star Mother

I am the mother of a United States Service Member.
My child gave me this title.

I will give him a heart full of wonder at his accomplishments and a voice that praises his desire to serve.

I will place my faith in his military training and in God's protection.

I will give him the prayers that will follow him where I cannot.

I will be strong when I want to cry and be brave when I want to cower.

He will know that I am behind him every step of the way.

Because I bear the title of Mother of a United States Service Member.

Blue Star Mothers meet the 3rd Thursday of every month at **6 PM** at the Lexington VFW Post 8738, 424 Cedarcrest Drive. The meetings are open to anyone who has a loved one in deployed status.

USS NEW YORK

Made from the World Trade Center

It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center. It is the fifth in a new class of warship – designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft.

Steel from the World Trade Center was melted down in a foundry in Amite, LA to cast the ship's bow section. When it was poured into the molds on Sept. 9, 2003, "those big rough steelworkers treated it with total reverence," recalled Navy Capt. Kevin Wensing, who was there. "It was a spiritual moment for everybody there." Junior Chavers, foundry operations manager, said that when the trade center steel first arrived, he touched it with his hand and the "hair on my neck stood up." "It had a big meaning to it for all of us," he said. "They knocked us down. They can't keep us down. We're going to be back."

The ship's motto? "Never Forget"



WANTED!

The SC State Guard is in desperate need of 30-06 blank ammunition for funeral details. If you have any available or know of a supply source, please contact COL Frank Whitlock at (803) 806-4238.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The VA Regional Office is currently hiring veterans service representatives. Additional personnel (approximately 75) will be hired to man a new Regional Call Center by the end of September.

Check with www.USAJobs.gov for announcements on these positions.

ATTENTION... POWS AND WIDOWS OF POWS

DORN VAMC is holding a seminar for you on **Wednesday, August 8th, 2007** from 10 am to 3 pm.

The seminar will be held in Building 106, Room D-100. If you have any questions regarding this seminar, please contact **Sheree Colvin** at **803-776-4000, ext. 7622**.



VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF LEXINGTON COUNTY 605 West Main Street, Suite 101 Lexington, SC 29072 (803) 785-8400

AUGUST OUTREACH PROGRAM

Aug. 7th	8-12	Batesburg/Leesville
Aug. 14th	9-12	Chapin
Aug. 21st	8-12	Swansea
Aug. 28th	9-12	West Columbia

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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