

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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VET NEWS

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February 2007

DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb. 1	National Freedom Day
Feb. 2	Groundhog Day
Feb. 3	Sinking of USS Dorchester (1943)
Feb. 12	Lincoln's Birthday Operation Homecoming (1973)
Feb. 14	Valentine's Day
Feb. 15	Sinking of USS Maine (1898)
Feb. 17	Purple Heart Day
Feb. 19	President's Day (VA office closed)
Feb. 22	Washington's Birthday (1732)
Feb. 23	Raising of US flag on Iwo Jima (1945)

SOME WAYS TO HELP A VETERAN

Some ways how an organization or individual can help a veteran or military service member include the following 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 your 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, 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 or items can be received at the VA office.
- 3) Needy veterans: many 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.

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES – SUPPORT OF DEPLOYED TROOPS

Several local Girl Scout and Brownie troops are selling cookies this year to support troops deployed overseas. People buying Girl Scout cookies are offered the opportunity to purchase additional boxes of cookies specifically for the troops. This is a joint project between the Girl Scouts and the Blue Star Mothers. Last year, the Blue Star Mothers shipped approximately 11,000 boxes of cookies to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Contact the VA office at 785-8400 if you want to support this project. In addition to the cookies, the Blue Star Families also are soliciting funds to be used in shipping the cookies to the troops.

Military Support Ministry a coalition of Christian churches supporting the military are also accepting donations. If you would be interested in working with this organization please call Janet Parsons at (803) 808-6485 or Honey Hutto at (803) 447-0348. They will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Other items requested by troops are: orange listerine, twizzlers, Slim Jims, dried fruit (apples, raisins, bananas, pineapple, 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.

The VA office is looking into establishing a Funeral Honor Guard. If you are interested any volunteering or have any questions, please call Gary R. Baker.

BUY AN EXTRA BOX OF GIRL SCOUT COOKIES TODAY!

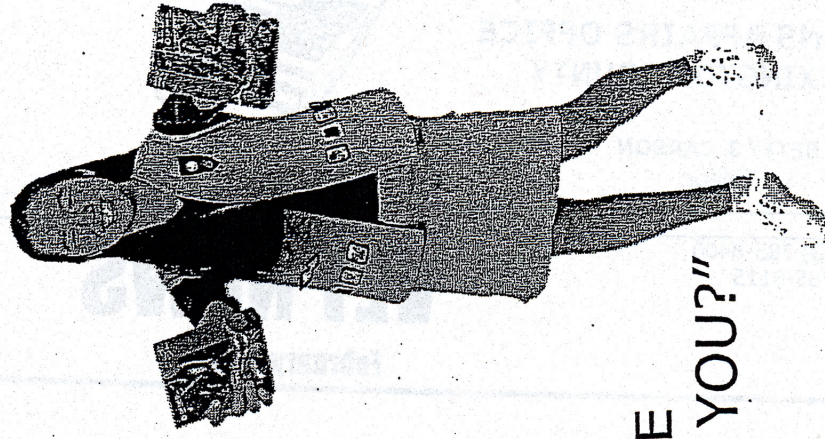
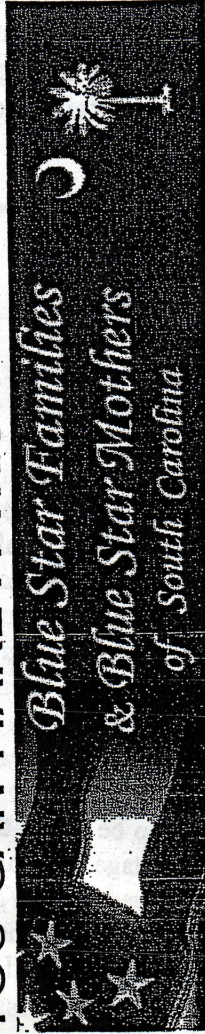
SUPPORT AMERICA'S SOLDIERS AND YOUR LOCAL GIRL SCOUTS

Blue Star Families and Blue Star Mothers of South Carolina and the Girl Scout Council of the Congaree Area, Inc. are working together during the month of February to show soldiers how big our hearts are.

Buy an extra box of Girl Scout Cookies for \$3.50 to satisfy an overseas soldier's wish for the sweet taste of one of their favorite stateside treats.

Girl Scout Cookies are one of the highest requested items by soldiers.

YOU CAN MAKE A WISH COME TRUE!



"PLEASE
WILL YOU?"

100% of your donation provides Girl Scout Cookies to Blue Star Family soldiers

Heroes & Legends

A Star Spangled Evening

Presented By

The Lexington School District One Educational Foundation

Monday February 5, 2007
Lexington High School
Cafetorium

Silent Auction 6:30 pm
Keynote Address 7:30 pm
Tickets \$20

Special Guest Speakers

The Navajo Code Talkers of World War II

Honoring the fallen veterans of all wars from
Lexington School District One with a special tribute to

Thomas D. Caughman

★ ☆ ★ Joshua L. Torrence ★ ☆ ★

Almar L. Fitzgerald

And a dedication of the Air Force JROTC Wing of
Lexington High School in honor of

U.S. Representative Floyd Spence

For Tickets and Information contact the
Lexington One Educational Foundation Office 803 808-4624
or email: cmcfarland@lexington1.net

KNOW HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST POWER SHUTOFFS IN WINTERTIME

If you worry about paying your utility bills, you need to know your rights and where to turn for help. You need to know what you can do when the cost of staying warm in the winter rises faster than their ability to pay.

Most publicly traded utility companies have adopted a policy in which utility customers cannot have their services cut off: in South Carolina this means your heat cannot be turned off between December 1 and March 31. And any potential shutoff of utilities at any time can be delayed for 31 days if you are seriously ill. To qualify, you will need to give your utility company a certificate from your doctor. The delay can be renewed three times, but after April you must begin paying what you owe on your bill.

Before your heat can be shut off for non-payment, you must receive a shutoff notice. The notice must be separate from other mailings and must be identified clearly as a shutoff notice. The notice will tell you how you can avoid having your heat shut off and offer you several payment options.

In South Carolina, you have 10 days from when you receive the first termination notice to take action. If you have gotten behind on a payment plan, you will only have five days.

You may be able to get a grant of between \$110 and \$300 through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help with heating expenses. This help is available from October 1 to April 30 for most South Carolinians, though older and disabled customers can apply earlier. You may be eligible if your annual income is less than \$14,700 for one person or \$19,800 for a couple.

For more information, call toll free: 1-866-389-5655 or visit www.aarp.org/sc.

WHEN INSULTS HAD CLASS!

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire." --Winston Churchill

"A modest little person, with much to be modest about." -- Winston Churchill

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." -- Clarence Darrow

"He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know." -- Abraham Lincoln

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." -- Groucho Marx

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." -- Mark Twain

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." -- Oscar Wilde

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play. Bring a friend—if you have one." -- George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

HELP VETERANS AND TAKE A CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION ON YOUR STATE TAXES

South Carolina Veterans' Trust Fund—South Carolinians helping veterans! As veterans' benefits continue to erode, this Trust Fund ensures that your voice is heard via supporting veterans' programs designed to benefit veterans and their families. This fund complements many state and federal initiatives and is managed by veterans for veterans.

South Carolina Military Family Relief Fund—This fund awards grants to families of members of the South Carolina National Guard or Reserves who are called to active duty as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Grants are distributed based on need, status, and circumstances.

Make your donations on your South Carolina State Income Tax Return this year.

The Lexington County

"My 9-1-1"

Program

Sponsored By:
Lexington County Sheriff's Department
Lexington County Fire Service
Lexington County EMS
Lexington County Communications Center

Do you want to help emergency service personnel respond to a call at your home or business?

If so, enroll in The Lexington County "My 9-1-1" Program!

By enrolling, you can provide emergency personnel with critical information, for example...

You can let the Sheriff's Department know who to contact if a deputy finds your business or residence unlocked at night, or,

You can inform Fire Service or Ambulance personnel about someone living with you who may have difficulty communicating or moving about.

The Lexington County "My 9-1-1" Program is designed for YOU to HELP US, HELP YOU!

This program is **VOLUNTARY**. The information you provide is **CONFIDENTIAL**, and it will only be used by Lexington County public safety personnel to protect you and your property.

It's easy to enroll in the "My 9-1-1" Program!

You can simply complete the form on the back of this page. Then return the form to the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, your local county fire station, any on-duty Lexington County EMS employee, or you can mail it to:

Lexington County Communications Center
ATTN: "My 9-1-1"
212 South Lake Drive
Lexington, SC 29072

- OR -

You can fill out the form online on the Lexington County website located at:

www.lex-co.com



Vial-of-Life

This program enables you to share important medical information (medications you are taking, allergies, etc.) with ambulance personnel who may respond to you during a medical emergency. For more information, contact your local pharmacy.

For more information, contact any of the following:
Sgt. Jeff Flanders (Sheriff's Dept.) 785-2503
Sgt. Diane Paavel (Sheriff's Dept.) 785-2504
Public Safety Administrative Office 785-8141

Lexington County "My 9-1-1" Program

Please type or print legibly in black ink.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Resident or Business Name		Initial Sign-up <input type="checkbox"/>	Date
		Change or Update <input type="checkbox"/>	
No.	Street Name (No PO Box)	Type (Rd, Dr, St, etc)	City (postal delivery)
Zip Code	Name of apartment complex or mobile home park (if applicable)		Apt. or Lot No.
Description of premises (two-story brick house, or tan double-wide, prefab, etc.)			Phone Number
Name of person completing form:		E-mail address (if any):	Phone Number
Owner Name and Address (if different from above)			Phone Number

SECURITY / KEYHOLDER INFORMATION

Is there an alarm system on the premises? Yes

If yes, name of alarm company? Phone Number

EMERGENCY CONTACT(S) SHOULD BE IN THE LEXINGTON COUNTY / COLUMBIA AREA

Primary Emergency Contact	Relation	Day Time Phone	Night Time Phone
Secondary Emergency Contact	Relation	Day Time Phone	Night Time Phone
Who, besides an occupant of this address, has a key?	Relation	Day Time Phone	Night Time Phone

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

Do any persons with special needs (i.e. hearing, walking, seeing problems, etc.) live on the premises? Yes

If yes, please explain:

Do you participate in the "Vial-Of-Life" program? (see reverse side of form for more information) Yes

Are there any dangerous substances / materials (explosives, corrosives, highly flammable material, etc.) on the premises? Yes

If yes, has a "Tier Two" Hazardous Materials form been submitted to the LEPC? (commercial only) Yes

If residential, please list material(s) and detail the storage location and amount of material.

Are there any animals on the premises which someone might consider aggressive? Yes

RELEASE

By the submission of this information, I understand and agree that the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Lexington County Fire Service, Lexington County EMS, and the County of Lexington neither warrants nor guarantees the safety or security of my property or family. This information is merely provided for whatever ancillary benefit that may be created. Further, I release, agree not to sue, and hold harmless, the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Sheriff James R. Metts, his deputies, agents, assigns, Lexington County Fire Service, Lexington County EMS, and the County of Lexington and others similarly situated from any and all liability associated in any way with the provision of this information or related provision of services.

Submit	Reset
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The Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office has some medical equipment which can be loaned out to veterans or their families. We have wheelchairs, a hospital bed, canes, potties, and walkers available. There is no charge but items must be signed out and returned when no longer needed.

Contact the VA office at 785-8400.



DISABILITY RATINGS

The VA Office is often asked questions about a combined rating in which the veteran has more than one rated disability. The combined rating is based on the whole man principle of 100%.

The combined rating is not the simple addition of the various separate rated disabilities but instead utilizes the Combined Ratings Table, a chart in the Federal Regulations. This chart considers the efficiency of the individual as affected first by the most disabling condition, then by the less disabling condition or conditions in the order of severity. Thus, a person having a 60 percent disability is considered 40 percent efficient. Proceeding from this 40 percent efficiency, the effect of a further 30 percent disability is to leave only 70 percent of the efficiency remaining after consideration of the first disability, or 28 percent efficiency altogether. The individual is thus 72 percent disabled.



VA COMPENSATION RATES RISE

VA disability and survivor benefits have been increased by 3.3 percent for nearly 3 million service-connected disabled veterans and their survivors in 2007.

The increase in disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation and pensions matches the cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security benefits.

As in past years, the increases, based on the Consumer Price Index, are rounded down to the next lower whole-dollar amount.

Those affected by the increase include veterans receiving compensation for disabilities sustained or made worse during their military service, as well as wartime veterans who are totally disabled from civilian-life causes and who receive a pension under an income-based program.

The increase also applies to survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected condition and those who served by an income-based program for survivors of wartime veterans.

Service-Connected Disability Basic Compensation Rates for 2007	
Disability Rating	Monthly Rating
10%	\$115
20	225
30	348
40	501
50	712
60	901
70	1,135
80	1,319
90	1,483
100	2,471
Special Monthly Compensation Monthly	
K	\$ 89
L	3,075
M	3,392
N	3,860
O or P	4,313
R1	6,164
R2	7,070
S	2,766
Clothing Allowance	\$662

HELP US!

Our office desperately needs volunteer van drivers to carry veterans to and from the VAMC for their appointments. Please remember that this is a volunteer position and you must pass a physical at the VAMC. Anyone interested in volunteering, please contact Betty Carson at the VA office: 785-8400.

Van Statistics
July 2006 – December 2006

Number of veterans transported	97
Number of trips to VAMC	71
Number of drivers	04
Number of Hours Logged	313
Number of Miles Driven	4628

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Lexington, SC 29072
(803) 785-8400

FEBRUARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

February 6th	8-12	Batesburg-Leesville
February 13th	9-12	Chapin
February 20 th	8-12	Swansea

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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