

**Veterans Affairs Office
of Lexington County**

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VET NEWS

February 2008

Dates To Remember

- Feb. 1st National Freedom Day**
- Feb. 6th Ash Wednesday**
- Feb. 8th Boy Scout Day**
- Feb. 14th Valentine's Day**
- Feb. 18th Presidents Day—
***County Offices Closed**
- Feb. 29th Leap Day**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
CLARIFIES FLAG-FOLDING POLICY**

To ensure burial services at the 125 national cemeteries operated by VA reflect the wishes of veterans and their families, VA officials have clarified the department's policy on recitations made while the U.S. flag is folded at the gravesite of a veteran.

"Honoring the burial wishes of veterans is one of the highest commitments for the men and women of VA," said William F. Tuerk, VA's Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs. "A family may request the recitation of words to accompany the meaningful presentation of the American flag as we honor the dedication and sacrifice of their loved ones."

Traditional gravesite military funeral honors include the silent folding and presentation of an American flag, a 21-gun salute, and the playing of Taps.

THE BURIAL CLARIFICATION INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- ◆ Volunteer honor guards are authorized to read the so-called "13-fold" flag recitation or any comparable script;
- ◆ Survivors of the deceased need to provide material and request it be read by the volunteer honor guards; and
- ◆ Volunteer honor guards will accept requests for recitations that reflect any or no religious traditions, on an equal basis

TRAUMATIC AMPUTEES SOUGHT FOR PROGRAM

Recently, much national media attention has focused on the traumatic amputees of the Iraq and Afghan conflicts. However, there is little known about the long term outcomes of traumatic amputations arising from war. The largest remaining group with a lifetime of experience is the Vietnam War amputees. It is estimated there were 6,000 or more Vietnam veterans that came home with missing limbs.

The Department of Defense has funded a partnership between Indiana University and Ohio State University to create the Indiana-Ohio Center for Traumatic Amputation Rehabilitation Research. They are trying to locate Vietnam veteran amputees in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the needs of these veterans. Their objective is to study the health, psychosocial, and rehabilitation needs of veterans with amputations to help determine the needs of Vietnam veterans and aid in the rehabilitation and adjustment of traumatic amputees from present and future conflicts. The Center is currently establishing a database of Vietnam veterans who had amputations.

The researchers are asking for those veterans to register by filling out an online questionnaire or obtaining a hard-copy version through the mail. Participant confidentiality will be strongly protected. The study currently has 125 Vietnam vets enrolled but there are many more out there and are encouraged to call or visit the website for more details.

Following is contact information for this project:
 EMAIL: robbinsc@iupui.edu
 WEBSITE: www.vietnamwaramputee.org
 BY PHONE: (866) 283-2599.

To obtain a hard-copy questionnaire, call the above number or write to:
Mr. Chris Robbins, Project Coordinator, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Indiana University, 1140 West Michigan St., Coleman Hall CF 124, Indianapolis, IN 46202. [Source: Office of the Secretary of VA VSO Liaison 13 Dec 07 ++]



SANTA VISITS OUR VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS



**VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS NEEDED
ONE DAY A WEEK,
ONE DAY A MONTH, OR
AT YOUR CONVENIENCE-
ANY HELP WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED
PLEASE CALL 803-785-8400**

Oldest Known World War I Veteran Dies at Age 109

Toledo, Ohio—**J. Russell Coffey**, the oldest known surviving U.S. veteran of **World War I**, died December 20, 2007, at the age of 109. At the time of his death, he was one of only three remaining survivors of the “war to end all wars”. The two remaining U.S. veterans are Frank Buckles, 106, of Charles Town, West Virginia, and Harry Richard Landis, 108, of Sun City Center, Florida, according to the Veterans Affairs Department.



In recent years, surviving WWI veterans have received honors and have done a flurry of interviews. In May of 2007, Frank Buckles was grand marshal of the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C., riding in the back of a car. But, Coffey once confided to his daughter, Betty Jo Larsen, that he wished people would remember his service rather than his old age. He told her “even a prune can get old.” Her death preceded Mr. Coffey’s in September 2007.

Coffey enlisted in the Army while he was a student at Ohio State University in October 1918, a month before the Allied powers and Germany signed a cease-fire agreement. He was discharged a month after the war ended. His two older brothers fought overseas, and he was disappointed at the time that the war ended before he shipped out. But he told the Associated Press in April of 2007, “I think I was good to get out of it.”

Born September 1, 1898, Coffey played semipro baseball in Akron, earned a doctorate in education from New York University, taught in high school and college and raised a family. He delivered newspapers as a youngster and would read the paper to immigrants, his daughter said. “That was the beginning of him being a teacher,” she said. After he left the Army, he returned to Ohio State University and received two degrees from that university.

He said he loved teaching. He had a remarkable memory and was independent, his daughter said, He drove his car until the age of 104, and lived in his own home until a year later. He was a swimmer and credited healthy eating and exercise for his longevity.

His wife, Bernice, to whom he was married in 1921, died in 1993. Betty Larsen was their only child.



Corporal Frank Buckles, seen here in the 2007 National Memorial Day Parade

Harry Richard Landis



J. Russell Coffey



Quote of the Month:

"Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem"

-- Ronald Reagan

IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

Now is the time for the submission of yearly **EVR's and MER's**. **Eligibility Verification Reports (EVR) and Medical Expense Reports (MER)** are due and should be submitted by the first of March.



We will be happy to assist in the completion of these reports. Please call our office at 785-8400 to make an appointment for this purpose.

Be sure to gather all information needed for the reports and bring it with you at the time of your appointment.

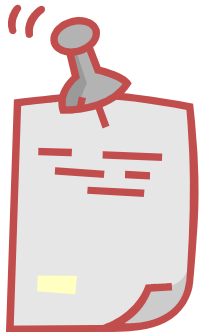
Feel free to call our office with any questions regarding these reports.

2008 SOLDIERS AND VETS CHARITY TOURNAMENT

Once again, the Soldiers and Vets Charity Golf Tournament will be held on April 4th at Fort Jackson Golf Club on the Wildcat Course. Funds raised benefit the volunteer programs at Dorn VA Medical Center and the American Red Cross at Fort Jackson. The tournament is limited to 32 4-person teams.

Registration fees cover green and cart fees, a tournament hat and dinner following play. Prizes range from \$100 for 4th place to \$400 for 1st place.

Pre-registration and sponsorship information can be obtained by contacting Ivette Starkey at 803-736-3110, ext. 3481. For teams that are not pre-registered, registration begins at 11:00. The shotgun start is at noon.



PLEASE NOTE:

THE DAV VAN WILL *NOT* RUN ON FEBRUARY 18, 2008. ALL COUNTY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON THAT DAY.



HATS OFF to the CONGAREE AREA GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL



HATS OFF to the CONGAREE AREA GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL for selling 13,000 boxes of girl scout cookies to benefit our service members! The Blue Star Mothers of SC shipped these cookies to our very grateful men and women overseas at a cost of over \$7,000 in the year 2007. Before this effort can begin in 2008, we need to raise approximately \$10,000 for postage.

If you would like to support this effort, please contact the Midlands Chapter of the **Blue Star Mothers** at **803-206-6088**.

They also have a website: www.bluestarmotherssc.com

American soldiers love girl scout cookies

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE E-MAILS WE HAVE RECEIVED

Thank you for your support!!!

As you can see from the attached pictures, you made a lot of soldiers, and a few sailors smile. Your love and support give the service man and woman a great sense of peace. Your kindness is far reaching. Like a pebble dropped in a pond, the peace you give one soldier will spread throughout the entire military. On behalf of the 54th Sig Bn, Eternally grateful,
Chaplain Lesh



You don't know how happy you made 35 homesick guys.
CPT Joe Smith

We miss you all and the greatest country on earth - America. I work in a medical clinic where hundreds of soldiers come weekly and we placed your boxes out for any soldier to take. The very soldiers you see on CNN and other news programs are the individuals receiving your wonderful gift, both cookies and reassurance that you are behind us and supporting us. Thank you so much!

Major Matthew St. Laurent

I wanted to let you know that we appreciate your support and words of encouragement. I also enjoyed reading a special note from Ryan of Lake Murray Elementary School (3rd Grade). It is always exciting to get mail here. But it especially good to receive so much that we can share with one another. We also gave a few boxes to some of the local children. That was a treat.

Bryan Tolar

It is the little things from home such as these cookies that really make our days over here.

SGT Tyler Cruzen
A Co 136th SIG BN

Feel as though we here in Afghanistan now have a new family. Since a few of us are from the Columbia / mid-lands area nice to know that kindness, prayers and well wishes are the greatest from those so close. God bless everyone there!

SFC Jeffrey Wilcox
CFC-A CJ6



DISPLAY OF THOSE KILLED IN THE SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001 TERRORIST ATTACKS CURRENTLY LOCATED IN OUR LOBBY

- ◆ “**Flag of Heroes**” lists all of the rescue workers, first responders, etc. killed in the attacks.
- ◆ “**Flag of Honor**” lists all of the victims of the attacks. Stop by and check out this moving display while it is still in our building. **We will never forget the events of that day.**



Raymond Caughman Honored at Inaugural Lexington District One Event

Lexington School District One held its first annual “**Heart of Lexington One**” event on January 17, 2008 at Lexington High School. Mr. Raymond Caughman was chosen as the first honoree in the event, which will recognize community citizens and leaders who have had a profound effect on the community of Lexington School District One.



Raymond Caughman has lived his entire life in Lexington County. During his career he has touched thousands of lives. Throughout the years, he has been a staunch and outspoken supporter of public education, especially Lexington District One Schools, his alma mater. At the first annual “Heart of Lexington One” event, he was recognized for his genuine love for and commitment to the community he has loved and served throughout his personal and professional life.



At Mr. Caughman's request, proceeds from the ticket sales and donations to the event will go to *The Raymond Caughman Books for Children* fundraiser. These funds will assist in the upgrading of media center materials in Lexington One schools. This event establishes the “Raymond Caughman Books for Children” Fund.

UNDERSTANDING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

PART III in series of 3 articles addressing this issue...

PART THREE: WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

There are a number of resources available for you or anyone you know who may be suffering from PTSD.

Locally:

- ⇒ **The Vet Center** is located at 1513 Pickens Street, Columbia, SC and may be reached by phone: **803-765-9944** or fax: **803-799-6267**
- ⇒ **William Jennings Bryan Dorn U.S. Veterans Hospital** is located at 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC and may be reached by phone: **803-776-4000**
- ⇒ **Lexington County Veterans Affairs: 803-785-8400** Lexington County residents who need assistance in filing a claim or finding help should call our office for an appointment.
- ⇒ **Richland County Veterans Affairs: 803-576-1908** Richland County residents should contact this office for help.

On the Internet:

- ⇒ **The National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder** aims to advance the clinical care and social welfare of U.S. veterans through research, education and training on PTSD and stress-related orders. Their website address is : www.ncptsd.va.gov
- ⇒ **Anxiety Disorder Association of America: www.adaa.org**

A NOTE ABOUT OUR RETURNING SOLDIERS:

It is apparent that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are having a major impact on the men and women serving there. The VA is taking steps to make sure that these men and women have needed mental health services available to them. However, this study shows that more effort is needed to make sure these services are being sought out and used.

If you are a returning service member in need of mental health services, it is important to go to your local VA for help. The National Center for PTSD provides information on what steps you can take to get help. Help is also available through other resources such as the Anxiety Disorder Association of America. These websites are listed above.

SCARNG PLANS REINTEGRATION FOR SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES

The purpose of reintegration is to successfully return soldiers and families to their normal family, work, school and community lives. Workshops are being planned for the following locations:

Saturday, **April 13, 2008**—Location: Columbia, S.C. seminar scheduled for Military Host 132 MP CO but all deployed families are invited

Saturday, **April 26, 2008**—Location: Columbia, S.C. scheduled make up brief for Host State FRG Network but all deployed families are invited

These seminars are being designed for the return of 218 BCT Main Body and 132 MP Company. Each event will last a total of 4 1/2 hours.

For more information about these workshops, please contact:

COL Keith Dunn (SCNG J1) 803-806-1622 or by email: Michael.k.dunn@sc.ngb.army.mil

LTC Taube Roy (SCNG State Family Program Director) 803-806-1750 or by email: taube.roy@us.army.mil

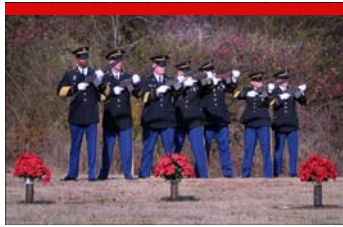
CW3 Terry O'Connor (SCNG Reintegration Officer) 843-423-3271 or by email: wto_maod@bellsouth.net

FALLEN SOUTH CAROLINA SOLDIER LAID TO REST

About 700 people filled Lyman United Methodist Church to say a final goodbye to Sergeant Shawn Hill. Hill, a S.C. Army National Guard member and 1990 graduate of Byrnes High School, was killed by a roadside bomb on January 2, 2008 in Afghanistan. He was 37 years old.



A member of the 178th Engineer Battalion, 218th Infantry Brigade, Sergeant Hill also served in Iraq in 2004. He is survived by his wife Julie and five sons, from Wellford. He is also survived by his mother, Louise Henderson, a sister and three brothers, all from Spartanburg.



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
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FEBRUARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Feb. 5th	9-12	Batesburg/Leesville
Feb. 12th	9-12	Chapin
Feb. 19th	9-12	Swansea
Feb. 26th	9-12	West Columbia

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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