

Veterans Affairs Office of Lexington County

TELEPHONE: (803) 785-8400

FAX: (803) 785-0115

EDITOR: *Debbie Myers*



GARY R. BAKER
DIRECTOR

BARBARA O'CONNOR
ASST. CSO

JENNIFER HENDRIX
VETERANS SPECIALIST

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

VET NEWS

January 2008

DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 1st New Year's Day /
county offices closed

Jan. 14th Veterans Advisory
Committee Meeting—7PM

Jan. 21st Martin Luther
King Day /
county offices closed

*****Note: THE DAV VAN
WILL NOT RUN ON MON.
the 21st. *****



CEMETERY NEWS

The Cemetery in Anderson, S.C., officially named the **M.J. "Dolly" Cooper Veterans Cemetery**, was scheduled to open during the week of December 17th, 2007.

CORRECTION! This cemetery is a State cemetery, not a National one. Sorry for any confusion this may have caused.
- Editor

New "Support Our Troops!" License Plate Debuts

The South Carolina DMV is offering a new Support Our Troops! License plate, available for purchase at all S C tag offices, and online through the DMV website.

Support Our Troops Chairman Martin Boire says purchasing the plate allows civilians an opportunity to honor those who are protecting them.

The extra cost of the plate is \$15 a year the extra cost benefiting troops and their families, promoters say.

Officials say not only does the plate show support for deployed neighbors, it also raises private money to assist the families of active duty troops with education, car repairs, medical and home expenses, family emergencies and immediate finances.

More information about the new plate can be found on the South Carolina page of www.SupportOurTroops.org. People can also register for more information while visiting the website. The Support Our Troops! license plate is currently available in 24 states and the group expects to offer the plate in 19 more states over the coming year.



From Our Office to You and Yours... HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Gary, Barbara, Jennifer and Debbie

**VETERANS ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
MEETING**

**The next meeting of the
Veterans Advisory
Committee will be on
Monday, January 14,
2008
at 7:00 P.M.**

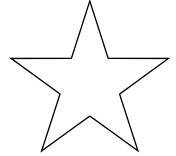
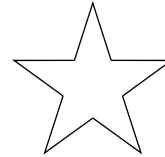
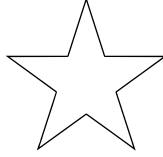
**Meetings are held at the
Lexington County
Auxiliary Administration
Building.**

**Please call our office at
785-8400 with questions
about this meeting.**

Quote of the Month:

*“Everything that is really
great and inspiring is created by individuals who labor in
freedom..”*

Albert Einstein



**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**

This letter was received from a soldier of the **218th in Afghanistan** . I thought I would share it with our readers.-
Editor

To my beloved family and friends,

Yesterday was Veterans Day and many people have conveyed their gratitude for my service and that of all my brothers in arms. I suppose I should start off by saying you're all very welcome, and I hope that you and your family as well as my family and all of America will continue to live safe.

I pray that my time spent here in Iraq will be a small contribution in the continuing effort to maintain our country as the land of the free. That being said, I feel obligated to return that thanks and praise. It's hard to believe that there was a time, not so long ago in this country's history, that the soldier himself was chastised for his involvement in a war. Soldiers do not make wars, and contrary to popular belief most soldiers don't even like war. War is a humbling experience. A man will see things and live through events that don't exist in any other environment. Some are good, as you can imagine there is a type of camaraderie and bonding that only occurs when displaced men and women strive to achieve a complex goal they do not understand. Others are tragic and frightening, but through prayer and fellowship they are subverted from conscious thought.

The bottom line is that, for better or worse, almost none of us are here by our own accord. We volunteered to serve our country and to defend it when necessary. We didn't decide who the enemy is, and we don't get to choose on what ground we meet them. We do what is asked of us by the leaders the American public has elected. I feel so sad for those men who have risked life and limb and those who made the ultimate sacrifice and did not get the respect this country owed them. It is completely confounding to know that there was a time where a man could love his country so much that he would suffer through constant trepidation and risk his own life, only to be rewarded with contempt and disdain from his fellow countrymen upon his return. I love my country, and I thank God that my service to it is received so warmly by my friends and family. History is a gift that brings wisdom to its descendants.

It is fortunate for me that our country has learned from its past. We now understand that a man may join the Armed Services for any number of reasons, be it a political ideal, a chance for an education, or purely for honor. He might find himself in a foreign land with men who speak a language he does not understand because of a plan decided upon by men he will never meet. He will go where he is told and prepare for what is to come, following orders against which he has no power or control. But in the end, when a quiet desert road explodes and burst into pure chaos and a faceless enemy swarms the devastation, a soldier does not fight for the President, or democracy, or any other ideal that has brought him to this place.

He fights for his Driver, so he will make it home to his wife and three month old baby. He fights for his Gunner, so that his mother can bake him a cake on his 19th birthday. He fights for the Truck Commander and his Dismount because they are fighting for him. This is the fundamental difference between why we fight and what we are fighting for. Ideals have brought us to this place, but love for one another will bring us home.

There is no such thing as a good war. There is only a just war and even that is a matter of perspective. I am truly thankful for everyone back home that celebrated Veterans Day. It is an undeniable blessing for me and every service man that God has granted this nation the wisdom to understand that it is right to hate the war, but to always love the soldier. I thank you all, my closest friends and family, for your support. I promise to repay your solicitude with a dedicated commitment to serve with honor and return home safely.

May God bless you and bring your loved ones safely close together so we may celebrate the undying love of Christ this Holiday season.

Sincerely,

Joey Warren



CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVE “QUICK REFERENCE SHEET” 2008

Compensation:

Monthly Rate: Statutory Award:

10%	\$117	K	\$91
20%	\$230	L	\$3145
30%	\$356	M	\$3470
40%	\$512	N	\$3948
50%	\$728	O	\$4412
60%	\$921	P	\$4412
70%	\$1161	R1	\$6305
80%	\$1349	R2	\$7232
90%	\$1517	S	\$2829
100%	\$2527	Q	\$67

Dependent Allowance: (Monthly)

Spouse:	\$142
Spouse & Child:	\$245
Child Only:	\$96
Each Dependent:	\$71
Dependent Parent:	\$114

Unusual Medical Expenses: (Monthly)

Veteran:	\$559
Veteran w/1 Dependent:	\$732
Veteran w/1 Dep Child:	\$490
Spouse:	\$375

Children of Women

Vietnam Veterans: (Monthly)

Level I:	\$123
Level II:	\$270
Level III:	\$930
Level IV:	\$1586

Spinal Bifida Benefits: (Monthly)

Level 1:	\$270
Level 2:	\$930
Level 3:	\$1585

Clothing Allowance (Annual) \$667

Automobile Allowance (Once) \$11,000

DIC Benefits: (Monthly)

Regular DIC:	\$1091
Housebound add:	\$128
A&A add:	\$271
P&T for 8 years or more add:	\$233
Each child add:	\$271

Pension:

Category: Monthly/Annual

Veteran:	\$932	\$11181
Veteran w/1 Dep:	\$1220	\$14643
Each Add Dep:	\$159	\$1909

Aid & Attendance:

Veteran:	\$1555	\$18654
Veteran w/1 Dep:	\$1843	\$22113
Each Add Dep	\$159	\$1909

Housebound:

Veteran:	\$1146	\$13664
Veteran w/1 Dep:	\$1427	\$17126
Each Add Dep	\$159	\$1909

Two Married Veterans: Monthly/Annual

Veteran:	\$1220	\$14643
----------	--------	---------

Survivors: Monthly/Annual

Spouse:	\$625	\$7498
Spouse w/1 Child:	\$818	\$9815
Spouse w/A&A:	\$999	\$11985
Spouse w/1 Dep, A&A	\$1063	\$12758
Spouse Housebound:	\$764	\$9164
Spouse w/1 Dep, HB:	\$956	\$11478
Each Dependent Child:	\$159	\$1909

Income Limitations: (Section 306) (Annual)

Veteran:	\$12718
Widow:	\$12718
Veteran w/1 Dep:	\$17095
Veteran w/ 1 Dep, A&A:	\$17595
Widow w/ 1 Dep:	\$17095
Child Alone:	\$10397

Spouse's Income Exclusion: (Annual) \$4059

Child Income Exclusion: (Annual) \$8950

Burial, Headstone, & Plot Rate Table:

Headstones:	\$136
Service-Connected Burials:	\$2000
Non Service-Connected Burials:	\$300
Plot Allowance:	\$300
State Cemetery Plot Allowance:	\$300

Medal of Honor Allowance (Annual) \$13548

Medicare Rates (Monthly) \$96.40



Who Is A Veteran?

He is a son, or a father, or a grand-father and all the grandfathers before him who have served our country in peacetime and in war.

She is a daughter, or a mother, or a grandmother and all of the grand-mothers before her who have served our country in peacetime and in war.

She is the nurse who held back her tears and smiled at the soldier who had his leg blown off and cried himself to sleep in a tent somewhere in hell.

He is the man wearing the Purple Heart who has just returned from two tours of duty in the Middle East and has yet to see his 25th birthday.

He might be the barroom loudmouth, whose frat boy behavior is far outweighed on the cosmic scales by hours of extraordinary courage under fire in a Vietnam jungle.

He is the prisoner of war who went away one person and returned another, or he did not come back at all. (There are still 90,000 MIA's from Korean and Vietnam wars.)

He is the hard-as-nails drill instructor that has saved countless lives by turn-ing slouchy, clueless kids into Marines.

He is the cop on the beat and the firefighter on the truck who learned the meaning of "serve and protect" on battlefields in foreign countries.

He marches in parades wearing his ribbons and medals on his chest, carrying the words "duty, honor, country" in his heart.

He is the quartermaster and the cook, the clerk and the barber who will watch the medals and the ribbons pass them by.

He is the elderly guy in the check-out lane at the supermarket, shoulders now somewhat stooped, whose wife looks at him and still sees the handsome young man in uniform that she married so many years ago.

He is an ordinary guy and yet an extraordinary human being, a person who served some of life's most vital years in the service of his country and sacrificed his own ambition so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

He represents the anonymous heroes in the Tomb of the Unknowns, whose presence at Arlington Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor died unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean depths.

From Valley Forge to Gettysburg, to the fields of France to World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Bosnia and the Middle East, he is a soldier and a patriot, a guardian of liberty and a sword against darkness. He is the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

Thank you from the heart, veterans. We will not forget you, not ever.

*Ruth Baldwin Williams
Swallow Cliff Chapter
Oak Forest, Ill.*

IMAGES FROM THE HOLIDAYS . IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TROOPS



WELCOME HOME, CAPTAIN!
Captain Donald Smith is greeted by his beautiful wife, Amy, the daughter of this newsletter's editor!

UNDERSTANDING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

PART II in series of 3 articles addressing this issue...**PART III** will follow in February's newsletter.

PART TWO: WHO GETS PTSD?

According to the "*Guide for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*", published by the American Legion, anyone can experience PTSD symptoms after being exposed to a traumatic event. It is a normal reaction to a horrific situation. **A PTSD diagnosis is not a sign of weakness or malingering.**

There is no way to predict who will and who will not develop PTSD symptoms. It depends on how individuals perceive a situation and their other past experiences. Another important factor is whether or not treatment was received in a timely manner.

Current research shows that there may also be genetic or biological factors that influence how a person will react to extreme stress. It is not uncommon after a major loss or life-altering event to experience feelings of deep sadness, grief, and shock, or even some of the symptoms of PTSD. However, these feelings go away after a few weeks. This emotional state is known as Acute Stress Disorder and may or may not become PTSD.

Persons who have been exposed to or witnessed traumatic events such as death, mass destruction, natural disasters, acts of terrorism, crime, rape or abuse are particularly susceptible.

For veterans, in particular, stressful traumatic events may include working in combat zones where the service member needs to remain in a state of constant vigilance for extended periods of time, participating in peacekeeping missions, training accidents, military sexual assault, and medical emergencies.

Some service members have experienced sexual assault while serving in the military. However, these incidents often go unreported because the victim fears being shunned or punished. Also the assailant may have been in the chain of command, further complicating the situation. Difficulty also increases when the rape or assault occurred in a combat zone. **Sexual assault is a crime, and needs to be reported.**

These events may cause the survivor to react with intense fear, helplessness, hopelessness and horror.

PTSD can also affect families.

Often during deployments, the service members' families have had to get along without them, so when they come home, they often feel out of place, and not needed. Military reunions are glamorized in the media, and although joyous, they can be very stressful. The stress of feeling helpless in consoling the PTSD-affected service member during difficult emotional times and the financial turmoil caused by loss of income can place an overwhelming strain on the entire family.

If PTSD symptoms have led to violence in the home, another generation of PTSD sufferers has been created.

PTSD is a normal reaction to an abnormal event. PTSD can be debilitating. However, no one has to live without hope. Next month we will provide information on how you can find help and support for you or a loved one .

IMAGES OF ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY AT CHRISTMASTIME



Rest easy, sleep well my brothers.

Know the line has held, your job is done.

Rest easy, sleep well.

Others have taken up where you fell, the line has held.

Peace, peace, and farewell...

Readers may be interested to know that these wreaths -- some 5,000 -- are donated by the Worcester Wreath Co. of Harrington, Maine. The owner, Merrill Worcester, not only provides the wreaths, but covers the trucking expense as well. He's done this since 1992. Also, most years, groups of Maine school kids combine an educational trip to DC with this event to help out. Making this even more remarkable is the fact that Harrington is in one the poorest parts of the state.



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY
605 West Main Street, Suite 101
Lexington, SC 29072**

JANUARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Jan. 8th	9-12	Batesburg/Leesville
Jan. 15th	9-12	Chapin
Jan. 22nd	9-12	Swansea
Jan. 29th	9-12	West Columbia

*** Note the change of dates due to New Year's Day Holiday***

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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