

**Veterans Affairs Office
of Lexington County**



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VET NEWS

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Welcome Spring !



Dates To Remember

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Mar. 2nd | Vietnam War Began (1965) |
| Mar. 3rd | Star Spangled Banner
Became National Anthem (1931) |
| Mar. 9th | Daylight Savings Time Begins |
| Mar. 16th | Palm Sunday |
| Mar. 17th | St. Patrick's Day |
| Mar. 20th | Spring Begins |
| Mar. 21st | Good Friday |
| Mar. 23rd | Easter Sunday |

2008 SOLDIERS AND VETS CHARITY GOLF 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.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out and meet it. "

Thucydides, Greek historian

REUNIONS LOW-KEY FOR TROOPS AND FAMILIES

Returning S.C. National Guard Soldiers “try to readjust and relax”

The first group of S.C. National Guard soldiers returning from Afghanistan and their families plan to take their first few days together again slow and steady. “We’ll try to readjust and relax,” said Alison Johnson of Marion. Her husband, Sergeant 1st Class Tony Johnson, is one of about 170 troops - members of the Marion-based 1st Battalion, 263rd Armor Regiment—who arrived January 23rd at Fort Stewart, Georgia, after a year in Afghanistan.

The troops remained at Fort Stewart until January 27th, filling out paperwork, undergoing medical exams, attending briefings and getting any needed counseling before heading home. The Guard’s 218th Brigade Combat Team still has 1,600 soldiers in Afghanistan. Those troops will come home in May.

After returning home from a combat zone, it is **important** for soldiers to keep the first few weeks stateside a low-key affair to help in the transition back to military life, according to military counselors. In the days leading up to the soldiers’ return, both the troops and their families are counseled about how to deal with each other after a year’s separation. Reunions with families and friends are expected, but counselors advise the families to keep the gatherings small and simple.



RETURNING HOME



Making the transition from a combat zone to civilian life requires time and understanding. Here are some tips for troops, families and soldiers’ friends from Lt. Col. Steve Shugart, chaplain with the S.C. Army National Guard:

- **Listening without pushing.** Being in a combat zone is a unique experience that might be difficult to share. A soldier might prefer to talk about something other than war.
- **“Normalize” the homecoming.** The soldier wants some celebratory time but also needs to decide whom he sees. Soldiers normally don’t want a big fanfare on their return.
- **Moderate use of alcohol.** Alcohol can quickly become the door-opener to problems.
- **Rejoin the norm.** The soldier should go back to groups he or she was a part of and participate in normal life events—attending ballgames, concerts, plays or going to dinner.
- **Don’t go back to work too soon.** Soldiers should take a break from work until his normal sleep cycle returns.
- **Stay in touch with other soldiers.** Peer support is key to successful readjustment.

Information taken from *The State Newspaper*, January 27, 2008 edition

Remembering the “Forgotten War”...Korea

The Korean War was one of several military conflicts that occurred during the Cold War, as the United States and its allies attempted to stop the spread of communism. This conflict began on June 25, 1950, when North Korea invaded South Korea. Prior to the end of the Second World War, North and South Korea had been a single country known as Korea. After the war, Korea became two countries, where North Korea favored communism while South Korea preferred a more democratic and capitalistic system. By invading South Korea, North Korea hoped to reunite the two nations as a single country under communism.

With North Korea's invasion of South Korea, the United States sought permission from the United Nations to militarily support the South Korean government. The United Nations granted permission to the United States to send troops to the two Koreas to free South Korea from North Korea's military occupation. Although many of the soldiers sent to South Korea were members of the United States military, they were under the direct control of the United Nations. Because of this and because the United States never formally declared war on North Korea, many people contend that the Korean War should be called the Korean Conflict rather than referred to as a war. Technically, these people are right from the American perspective, yet North and South Korea were clearly engaged in a war. The American troops, as well as those from other countries, were hoping to free South Korea from communism and thus were participating in the Koreans' war.

With the arrival of United Nations forces, the South Koreans quickly drove the North Koreans back into North Korea. The South Koreans and United Nations forces did not simply stop with the North Koreans' withdrawal from South Korea. These forces continued to attack the North Korean military, hoping to free North Korea from communist control. By October 1950, the United Nations troops had driven North Korean forces to the border of China. Fearful that the UN soldiers intended to invade China, another communist nation, Chinese military forces crossed the Chinese-North Korean border and launched an attack against the United Nations troops. By early 1951, the Chinese had driven the United Nations troops to the 38th parallel, roughly the original border between North Korea and South Korea. For the next two years a virtual stalemate existed around the 38th parallel. While each side launched numerous attacks against the other, neither side succeeded at dislodging its opponent. On July 27, 1953, both sides agreed to a ceasefire, essentially bringing the Korean War to an end. South Korea remained free from communism, and the original borders of these two countries remained essentially unchanged.

Many historians claim that the Korean War was a draw, with no clear victor. In essence, that is true. The United States, however, through the United Nations, did succeed in freeing South Korea from communism. At the same time, this victory was costly. Approximately one million South Koreans lost their lives in this conflict. A slightly larger number of North Koreans died, amounting to over eleven percent of this nation's entire population. More than fifty-four thousand Americans died, and another 100,000 soldiers suffered non-fatal wounds. At the end of the Korean War, more than eight thousand Americans were missing in action.

IMAGES



CHAPTER 61 DISABILITY PAY UPDATE :

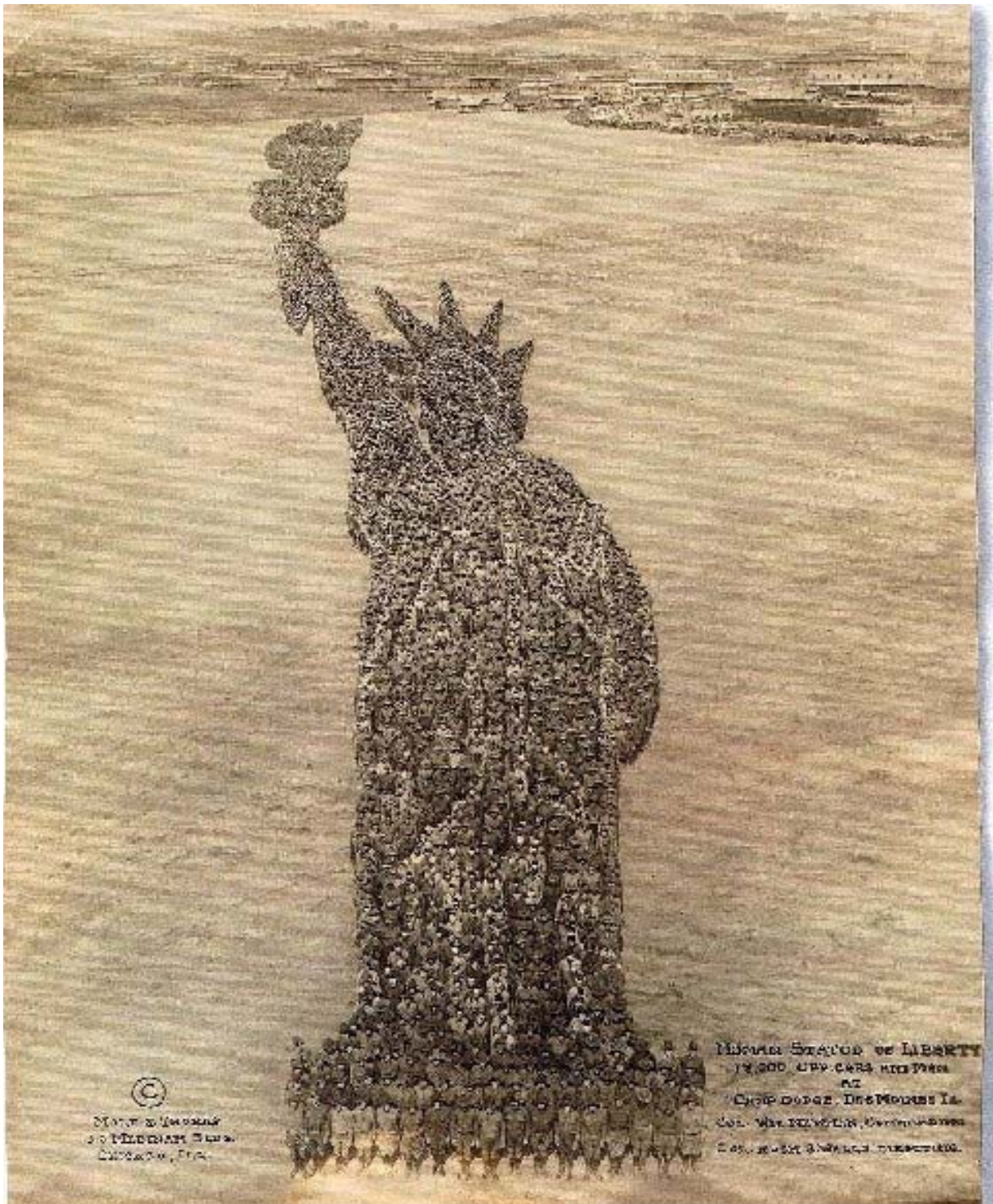
Tens of thousands of veterans forced from service short of 20 years because of combat-related injuries will be eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) effective 1 JAN 08, under a compromise 2008 defense authorization bill worked out by House and Senate conferees. The compensation payments would be set using the same formula as military retirement, usually 2.5% of base pay multiplied by years of service. The payments would be paid on top of disability compensation, thus ending for these combat-injured the long time ban on “concurrent receipt.” The size of the eligible population among so-called “Chapter 61” retirees was not immediately available, but the projected cost of the combat-related program is \$678 million over the next 10 years. Conferees rejected a more modest House plan that would have restricted compensation eligibility to the most seriously disabled who served at least 15 years. [Source: The News Tribune Tom Philpott article] 12/08/07]

Top 10 Ways to Protect Your Memory

As with so many aspects of aging, sharpness of memory varies from individual to individual. Some of this is hereditary...However, just as you can keep your body in shape by following a wellness regimen, you can take measures to keep your memory sound.

- ⇒ **1. Remember to practice good nutrition.** We can choose foods that help protect memory. The good news is that is you are one of the many adults who follow a “heart smart” diet, you are also on track for “memory smart” choices as well. Even on a day-to-day basis, nourishing meals improve alertness and help us retain memories. Take a multivitamin, too, but don’t take megadoses, as that could be toxic.
- ⇒ **2. Remember to stay physically active.** Just as the “heart smart” diet helps protect the brain, heart-strengthening aerobic exercise also helps ward off Alzheimer’s, stroke and other memory-damaging conditions. Obesity has been found to be a risk factor for dementia, so maintain a healthy weight. Talk to your healthcare provider about an exercise program that is right for you.
- ⇒ **3. Remember to sleep well.** People who suffer from sleep disturbances often experience memory problems. Many sleep problems are treatable, so speak to your healthcare provider if you experience trouble falling asleep, bothersome wakeful periods during the night, or snoring (which might suggest sleep apnea, a disorder that causes interruption in breathing during sleep.)
- ⇒ **4. Remember to treat depression and avoid stress.** Both of these conditions cause chemical changes in the brain that can be so severe that a person’s family or physician mistakenly suspects Alzheimer’s or other dementia. Counseling, meditation and other relaxation techniques might be in order if these conditions exist.
- ⇒ **5. Remember to quit smoking and limit alcohol consumption.** Many substances found in cigarette smoke damage the brain and impair memory. While a number of studies suggest that moderate drinking may actually be beneficial, having more than two drinks a day can be highly toxic to the brain.
- ⇒ **6. Remember to challenge your mind and memory.** Mental stimulation encourages new connections between brain cells...so the saying “use it or lose it” may apply here. Learn a new skill—take up an instrument or study a foreign language. Join a club, volunteer, find new ways to stay socially connected. Visit a museum or work a difficult puzzle. Passive activities like watching TV don’t offer the same benefits.
- ⇒ **7. Remember to have a memory fitness strategy.** It is actually possible to increase memory sharpness through training. Visualization, concentration and other effective memory skill techniques improve the retention and accessing of memories. A lot of supplemental technology is available—from simple sticky notes to voice recorders, personal organizers, day planners...to aid in the training process.
- ⇒ **8. Remember to use seatbelts and wear a bike helmet.** Head injury can result in catastrophic damage to the brain and memory. Take proactive steps to protect against all accidents. Remove clutter that might trip you up, install handrails by stairs or in the bathroom, if needed.
- ⇒ **9. Remember to bring up memory concerns at your next healthcare appointment.** Share with your doctor if you have problems, especially disorientation, short-term memory loss, or the sudden inability to complete familiar tasks. Early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s or mini-strokes allows aggressive treatment to begin right away. Denial of these conditions may affect the outcome of treatment. Early detection is key!
- ⇒ **10. Remember to have your healthcare provider review your medications.** Our lives are improved by many of the medications we take, but overmedication and the side effects of some drugs can dull the memory. Common culprits: tranquilizers, sleeping pills, pain medications, high blood pressure drugs. Your physician may switch you to a different drug or dosage to lessen their adverse effects.

“HUMAN STATUE OF LIBERTY”



Look closely at this image. It was taken by photographers Arthur Mole and John Thomas in July 1918 at Camp Dodge in Des Moines, Iowa, using 18,000 posed soldiers! It was part of a promotional campaign to sell war bonds during World War I. The soldiers posed on the parade (drill) grounds at Camp Dodge.

According to a July 3, 1986 story in the Fort Dodge Messenger, many of the men fainted as they were dressed in woolen uniforms and the temperature at the time of the photo neared 105 degrees! Although the intended use of this picture was to promote the sale of war bonds, it was never used.

COOKIES FOR OUR TROOPS

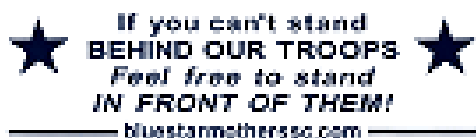
The Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office has been supporting the Blue Star Mothers in their efforts to supply our deployed troops with Girl Scout cookies as well as snack items and necessities.

As in the past few years, the Girl Scouts have offered supporters the opportunity to order Girl Scout cookies to go directly to the troops. Just order and pay for an extra box or two or three and the cookies will be provided to the Blue Star Mothers who pack the cookies along with cards and other snack and necessity items and pay for the mailing of these packages to our deployed troops.

The Veterans Affairs Office has an order form for the cookies. If you would like to support this worthwhile project, please call and send your check made out to **GSSCMM** (Girl Scouts of South Carolina Mountain/Midlands) or come by the Veterans Affairs Office to participate. Cookies are \$3.50 per box. Orders should be placed no later than February 29.

Donations of funds to help with mailing costs are also appreciated. In addition, donations of durable snack items as well as toiletry and coffee products generally provided in motel/hotel rooms also are appreciated by the troops.

We are anticipating more than 15,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies to be sent this year from the Greater Columbia area. Please support this program by February 29 to insure its continued success.



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 email: taube.roy@us.army.mil

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

You may also call the Lexington County V A office for further information.

Advocacy Program Assists Wounded Warriors

Navigating the military health system should be easier for wounded warriors and their families thanks to a new advocacy unit in TRICARE's Southern Region. The Warrior Navigation & Assistance Program (WNAP) provides guidance to active duty and Guard and Reserve service members as they transition through the military health system. Established by Humana Military Healthcare Services, the managed care support contractor for TRICARE's Southern Region, the WNAP offers one-on-one assistance with many unique health care challenges service members may face. Issues may include access to care or simply the need for information on available resources - be it the military health system, Veterans Affairs (VA) or other community assets.

"This is the kind of program that is a great enhancement to ongoing efforts within the MHS to help wounded warriors and their families," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity.

Service Members transitioning through the health care system can use a dedicated toll-free number. Calling **888-4GO-WNAP** provides direct access to a multi-disciplinary team with the mission to assist Service Members or their family members. The WNAP incorporates four elements: tools and information for service members, program management, clinical programs, and provider education and resources.

Resources on the web site www.humana-military.com include the "Information and Resources for Combat Veterans" brochure. Health care providers can find tools and resources addressing the unique needs of service members returning home from deployment. These tools are available worldwide to anyone with computer access. Care management initiatives include behavioral health support and assistance with seamless transition for Service Members and families for the care they need, when they need it. There is also expanded outreach to Guard and Reserve members with transition coordinators delivering detailed TRICARE benefit education.



WNAP services via the toll-free line are available to those who live in the TRICARE Southern region, which includes South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and most of Texas.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION - VETERANS ISSUES UPDATE

The House passed legislation by a vote of 407-2 on Dec. 6, 2007 that would expand small Business Administration (SBA) programs for veterans and military reservists. The bill (HR 4253), sponsored by Jason Altmire (D-PA) would authorize \$4.4 million to support Veterans Business Outreach Centers.

Approximately 4 million veterans own small businesses, approximately 14% of all such enterprises. The House measure would also establish a Women's Veterans Business Training Resource Program. The program would compile and distribute information on resources available to women veterans and also provide technical and regulatory assistance to small businesses owned by armed forces reservists.

[Source: Congressional Quarterly 12/07/07 Homan article]

Next-To-Last Surviving U.S. Veteran of World War I Dies At Age 108

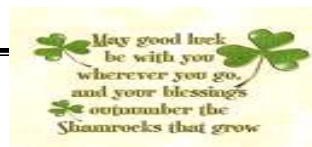
Harry Richard Landis, who enlisted in the Army in 1918, and was one of only two known surviving U.S. veterans of World War I, has died. He was 108.



Landis, who lived at a Sun City Center, Florida nursing home, died February 4, 2008, according to the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. The remaining U.S. veteran of WWI is Frank Buckles, 107, of Charles Town, West Virginia.

Landis trained as a U.S. Army recruit for 60 days at the end of the war and never went overseas. But the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs counts him among the 4.7 million men and women who served during the Great War.

In an interview with the Associated Press last April, Landis recalled that his time in the Student Army Training Corps involved a lot of marching. "I don't remember too much about it," said Landis, who enlisted at age 18 while in college in Fayette, Missouri. "We went to school in the afternoon and drilled in the morning." They often drilled in their street clothes. "We got our uniforms a bit at a time. Got the whole uniform just before the war ended," Landis said. "Fortunately, we got our greatcoats first. It was very cold out there."



MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the Wives of Vietnam Veterans is scheduled for Monday, March 10th, 2008 at 10:00 A.M.

****Please note time change**.**

The meetings are hosted by David Cox of the Columbia Vet Center and are open to wives / significant others of Vietnam veterans. The meeting location is 605 West Main St., Lexington, and is held in the auditorium.

Call 785-8400 for more information.



Reminder : 24-Hour Toll-Free Hotline Available

Veterans going through an emotional crisis can turn to a 24-hour hotline for help.



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has opened a **toll-free** hotline staffed with mental health professionals to take the calls. That number is **800-273-8255**.



**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: If you enjoy your freedom,
THANK A VETERAN TODAY!**

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

MARCH OUTREACH PROGRAM

Mar. 3rd	9-12	Batesburg/Leesville
Mar. 10th	9-12	Chapin
Mar. 17th	9-12	Swansea
Mar. 24th	9-12	West Columbia

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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