

**Veterans Affairs Office
of Lexington County**



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VET NEWS

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MARCH DATES FOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

Mar. 1st: 9-12 Batesburg-Leesville
Mar. 8th: 9-12 Chapin

Please call the office to schedule an
appointment.

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Mar. 2nd Vietnam War Began
(1965)
Mar. 3rd Star Spangled Banner
Became National
Anthem **(1931)**
Mar. 13th Daylight Savings Time
Begins
Mar. 17th St. Patrick's Day
Mar. 20th Spring Begins



Don't forget to "SPRING
FORWARD!" - set your
clocks **AHEAD one hour**
on March 13th at 2 A.M.



REMINDER

The Wives of Vietnam Veterans support group meeting is scheduled for the 2nd Monday of every month at 12:00 p.m. These meetings are held in Room 110 (auditorium) of the Lexington County Auxiliary Administration Building.

Please call Tyrone Hart, of the Columbia Vet Center, at 803-765-9944 to let him know that you will be attending.



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2011

New VA Support Line Provides Important Assistance to Caregivers *Benefits and Support Information a Phone Call Away*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is increasing its support to caregivers with a new, toll-free telephone line for the caregivers of Veterans of all eras.

“The families and loved ones who care for severely injured Veterans deserve the highest level of support,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “At VA, we consider them important partners in our efforts to care for and rehabilitate our nation’s heroes.”

The National Caregiver Support Line -- 1-855-260-3274 -- will serve as the primary resource and referral center to assist caregivers, Veterans and others seeking caregiver information.

The line unofficially started Feb. 1, and in its first week logged nearly 600 calls, including 134 referrals to local VA caregiver support coordinators and 233 calls from caregivers themselves.

“VA has been providing support for the caregivers of Veterans for more than seven decades,” Shinseki added. “We already have more than two dozen successful programs, policies and services that support the caregivers of Veterans of all ages.”

The support line will provide information regarding new caregiver benefits, referrals to local caregiver support coordinators as well as emotional support to those concerned with their ability to provide care to loved ones who are Veterans.

The National Caregiver Support Line will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Eastern time; and Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern time. Licensed VA social workers and health technicians will staff the support line.

Local caregiver support coordinators are available to assist Veterans and their caregivers to understand and apply for VA’s many caregiver benefits. VA also features a Web page, www.caregiver.va.gov, with general information on other caregiver support programs available through VA and the community.

Access to the National Caregiver Support Line was also identified as a significant need in a November 2010 study on caregivers of Veterans published by the National Alliance for Caregiving.

For an opportunity to get to know a few of today’s remarkable caregivers of Veterans, go to <http://youtube.com/user/veteranshealthadmin#p/u/0/XRmAwZHyrFE>.

SOUTH CAROLINA VETERAN'S ADVOCACY COUNCIL

VETERANS AND FAMILIES FIRST

Founding Organizations:

The American Legion, The Disabled American Veterans, The Military Order of Purple Hearts, Military Officers Association of America, The Retired Enlisted Association, South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers, The Vietnam Veterans of America, and The Veterans of Foreign Wars.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

South Carolina Veterans to Rally at the State House
Wednesday, April 27, 2011

Several hundred of South Carolina's Veterans will gather at State House Grounds on Wednesday, April 27th from 10am to 2pm On the North End Steps at the Capitol.

The Purpose of this rally is for the 413,000 South Carolina Veterans to have their voices heard when it comes to Veterans access to physical and mental Health care, spousal benefits and programs for the homeless Veterans.

Veterans of all branches are encouraged to Stand Up and Be Heard.

You have fought for your Country, Now Fight for your Rights.

For more information, contact Richland County Veterans Affairs Office at 803-576-1906

****There are more than 23.2 million Veterans in the United States****

SOUTH CAROLINA VETERAN'S ADVOCACY COUNCIL

* RALLY FOR OUR VETERANS *
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011 10:00am-2:00pm.
State House/Capitol North End Steps

Purpose

To Rally and Advocate for Veterans benefits and services, by bringing issues to the fore-front, for action.

Issues

Restoration and increased funding for County Veterans Affairs Offices, the State Division of veterans Affairs and Service Organizations.

Change the status of The State Division of veterans Affairs Office, by establishing a Commission on Veterans Affairs as a stand a-lone entity.

Permit veterans Service Organizations to conduct raffles and other fund-raiser activities, to support their causes, as clarified and identified by state law.

Provide access to health and mental health care for eligible Veterans, low-income and Homeless Veterans, mainly in rural areas.

Additional State of South Carolina Veterans Nursing Homes and possible improvements to existing Nursing Facilities/ plus access to adult Daycare Services.

Generate maximum use of State tax revenue for the benefit of Veterans and for certain eligible Surviving Spouses.

Increase Homeless Veterans Services/Advocate for Veterans employment opportunities.



WWII Tribute Show and More

Special Events for All WWII Veterans of South Carolina!

Saturday, April 2 - McEntire Joint National Guard Tribute To WWII Veterans -

- All WWII Veterans are invited as "Honored Guest" at the McEntire Joint National Guard Military and Families Appreciation Day. The event will be a thank you to all our Guard persons and Active service persons and their families. Special events are planned. **A special invitation will be sent to all WWII Veterans, which will allow their car to enter the base.**

Sunday, April 3 - First Baptist Church Tribute to WWII Veterans - - Pastor Wendell Estep and the members of First Baptist Church invite WWII Veterans and their families to be special guest at the 10:30 am worship service on April 3. After the worship service, enjoy lunch in one of Columbia's downtown restaurants before the Tribute Concert at 2:30 pm.

WWII Tribute Concert - - This will be a special Tribute to all WWII Veterans. The tribute will be held in Columbia at the Township Auditorium. The Glen Miller Band will be the featured entertainment. WWII Veterans and one guest will be admitted FREE. Show begins at 2:30 PM.

Ticket Information

Complimentary tickets for WWII Veterans and their one guest can be obtained by mailing reply card included with your invitation or by calling 803-582-8826. Tickets for the general public will be available through Ticketmaster by calling 1-800-745-3000 or online at ticketmaster.com and at the Township Auditorium box office. Tickets will be \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under.

Hotel Information

Hotels listed below have offered special rates for WWII Veterans and families during the Tribute Weekend.

Clarion Hotel: \$65.00 with discounted breakfast.

Call (803) 771-8711 and ask for "WWII Tribute" rate.

Marriott Downtown: \$62.00.

Call (803) 771-7000 and ask for the "Salute the Troops" rate.

Courtyard by Marriott Columbia Downtown at USC: \$63.

Call (803) 799-7800 and ask for "Salute the Troops" rate.

Hilton-The Vista: \$109.00.

Call (803) 744-7800 and ask for "WWII Tribute" rate.

Sheraton Downtown: \$105.00.

Call (803) 988-1400 and ask for "WWII Tribute" rate.

New and Enhanced VA Benefits Provided to Caregivers of Veterans

WASHINGTON—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching the first of a series of new and enhanced services supporting family caregivers of seriously ill and injured Veterans. In May 2010, President Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 legislation authorizing VA to establish a wide range of new services to support certain caregivers of eligible Post 9/11 Veterans.

“Caregivers make tremendous sacrifices every day to help Veterans of all eras who served this nation,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “They are critical partners with VA in the recovery and comfort of ill and injured Veterans, and they deserve our continued training, support and gratitude.”

In addition to the new benefits and services for eligible Veterans who were disabled in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001 (Post 9/11 Veterans), VA will also begin providing enhanced benefits and services to caregivers of Veterans of all eras who are already enrolled in VA care, including:

- ◇ Access to VA’s toll-free Caregiver Support Line: 1-855-260-3274,
- ◇ Expanded education and training on caring for Veterans at home,
- ◇ Other support services such as counseling and support groups and referral services; and
- ◇ An enhanced website for caregivers.

Some of the new benefits of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act are restricted by law to the caregivers of the most seriously ill and injured Post 9/11 Veterans. Those additional benefits include:

- ◇ A monthly stipend,
- ◇ Health care coverage,
- ◇ Travel expenses, including lodging and per diem while accompanying Veterans undergoing care,
- ◇ Respite care; and
- ◇ Mental health services and counseling.

VA will take the opportunity to report to Congress in the future on the feasibility of expanding the enhanced services to family caregivers of Veterans of all eras.

While some of these enhanced benefits are available now, many of the other significant newly-enacted benefits will require the issuance of regulations. These additional benefits include monthly stipends, pay for travel costs, medical coverage, training, counseling and respite care designed to prevent institutionalization of Veterans whenever possible. The law requires detailed regulations for determining eligibility, designating and approving caregivers, and providing stipends and health care coverage to primary family caregivers. The complex process required to implement these regulations will provide Veterans, caregivers and the general public the opportunity to provide comments before those regulations are finalized.

“VA has supported caregivers of Veterans of all eras for almost eight decades,” said Deborah Amdur of VA’s Care Management and Social Work Service, “and we know from our experience and research that Veterans are best served when they can live their lives as independently as possible surrounded by caring family and friends.”

Each VA medical center has designated caregiver support coordinators who will assist eligible Veterans and caregivers in understanding and applying for the new benefits. VA also has a Caregiver Support Web page, www.caregiver.va.gov, which will provide general information once final regulations are published.