



VETERAN NEWS

September 2011

Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office

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SEPTEMBER DATES FOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

Sept. 6th: 9-12 Batesburg-Leesville
Police Dept
Sept. 13th: 9-12 Chapin Town Hall

**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

Director's Corner

As the Nation reflects on the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks this month, it is difficult to believe it has been that long since our world was changed. I was on active duty with the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia and the 3rd Infantry Division when one of my Soldiers ran into my office out of breath to tell me the New York attacks had taken place. At first, I thought he was joking and when I realized he wasn't, I felt like my heart dropped to my feet. A few minutes later we learned of the attack on the Pentagon and then the Pennsylvania field. Our whole world was at a standstill because of these horrific acts and just a short while later, I got the call to assemble everyone at Company Headquarters.

Our Commander briefed us on what had taken place and we immediately began setting up guard points and patrols all over Fort Stewart. It was utter chaos and actually so hectic it was like we were preparing for war. Little did we know then what was going to happen as the Nation responded to these attacks. I had no time to think, other than for my Soldiers and the mission at hand. My wife called me several hours later and said she had been trying to get through for hours and I think reality hit me when I talked to her. I felt we would go to war over this and that I might not make it home to walk my daughter down the aisle when the time came.

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REMEMBER...

SEPTEMBER 11th, 2001



I wonder if this date takes you back to what you were doing when you heard about what happened when the Twin Towers were targeted? This day will mark a difference in our thinking of what freedom is. United we stand and still are today, but what a sacrifice it was.

I was working at Michelin then. It was break time and I headed downstairs. Everyone down there was in shock at what we were watching. The TV was on and we had just witnessed the attack of the second tower. We could not believe what was happening in front of us. All of us screamed and telling one another this cannot be real.

My first thought was of my brother and his wife that were flying in that morning from Las Vegas. I tried to call them but no answer. They had already landed in Columbia, and had their cell phones turned off and had not gotten the ok to turn them back on. Sure all of us can recall where we were, what we were doing and who we were with. All I wanted was to be assured that my family was ok.

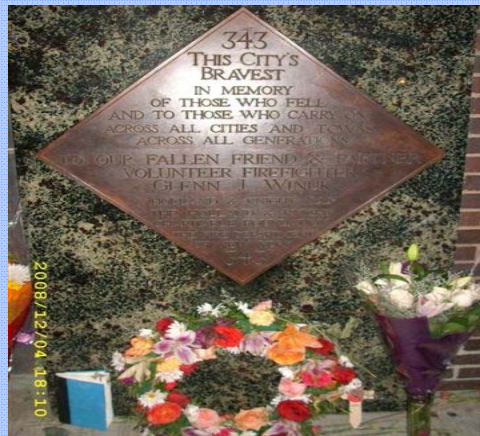
All of us are changed in different ways because in just a blink of an eye the things that we care about the most can be taken away. I was shocked and saddened by the devastation that I witnessed when I visited New York. They have a museum beside the Fire Station #55 that withstood the attack. They have a monument that they have placed in front of the station to honor all the lives that were lost that day.

If you have not thanked someone today for what they have done for you, please take a minute out of your busy day to do so. It would mean so much, not only for them, but what a difference it could make in your life.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Janet D. Smith

Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office



Pictured left to right: (1) Crane is sitting where the twin towers were. (2) This is a memorial that Station #55 put up for all of those who gave their lives. (3) This sign was found in front of Fire Station #55. These pictures were from a trip I made to New York City in December 2008



TRAVEL SECTION



- ◇ Free entry for all National Parks from November 11-13, 2011. A great time to see the country and not worry about paying to enjoy it!



- ◇ The Armed Forces Vacation Club at afvclub.com offers affordable military vacations around the world for military (active or retired) personnel and their families.

Smart Destinations

- ◇ Smartdestinations.com has travel packages for practically the entire country! They offer a Blue Ridge Pass that allows you to see 25 destinations for one low price. Check out their website for other offers in the U.S.!



County Offices will be closed on September 5th in observance of Labor Day.

The DAV van will not be running

Looking for Volunteer Van Drivers

The van runs on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm. If you can volunteer to drive the DAV van at least 1 day a month, contact the office at 803-785-8400.



DID YOU KNOW?

Active and retired military personnel and their dependents with proper military ID will be admitted **FREE** the entire 12 days of the fair. This is in appreciation for their service to our country and its citizens.

Also, join in for a patriotic flag-raising ceremony each day of the fair at 12:00 noon near the South Gate as the State Fair salutes our military and the USA.

The State Fair opens on Wednesday, October 12th and runs through Sunday, October 23rd.



Just a Reminder



The Advisory Committee will meet at 7pm on October 3rd in the VA office.

**LEXINGTON COUNTY
9TH ANNUAL
VETERAN'S PARADE**

**Sunday, November 6th, 2011
Main Street and South Lake Drive
Downtown Lexington**

**PARADE BEGINS AT 3:00PM
(no entry fee)**

COME HELP HONOR OUR VETERANS!

**Grand Marshal: Mr. Gary R. Baker
Retired Lexington County Veterans Affairs Director**

*A memorial service will be held at the Veterans
Monument following the parade*

SPONSORED BY:

**LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
AMERICAN LEGION POST 7
VFW POST 8738
TOWN OF LEXINGTON
KIRBY FLOATS**

**For More Information Contact:
Sharon Willis 785-1454
Veterans Affairs Office 785-8400**

2011 Lexington County Veteran's Parade Application
Sunday, November 6, 2011 at 3:00 p.m.

NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 28TH

(IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE, PLEASE CALL, EVERYONE IS WELCOME IN THIS PARADE)

ALL MARCHING BANDS AND ROTC GROUPS WILL MEET IN THE EMPTY PARKING LOTS OF BUSINESSES IN THE BUTLER STREET AND MAIN STREET AREA. PLEASE USE CAUTION! DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS AND PARK AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOTS. THIS IS WHERE YOU WILL NEED TO PICK UP ALL MEMEBERS. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE UP SPACES AT MCDONALD'S FOR PARKING.

PARADE ROUTE WILL LINE UP AT HAYGOOD AND WEST BUTLER STREETS, ENTER MAIN STREET TAKE A LEFT, GO DOWN MAIN STREET, TURN RIGHT ON SOUTH LAKE DRIVE AND THEN LEFT, ENDING AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT.

Name & Description of Entry: _____

Special Request: _____

Entry Contact Person: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Email address: _____ Fax: _____

Mail Applications To:

Lexington County Veteran's
Parade Committee
Attn: Sharon Willis, Chairperson
212 South Lake Drive, Ste 302
Lexington, SC 29072

For More Information Contact:

Sharon Willis - 803-785-1454
Cell # 803-237-9617
Fax # 803-785-8300
Veterans Affairs office 803-785-8400

***** Applications can be emailed to you also. Contact Sharon at swillis@lex-co.com*****

WE DO OUR BEST TO PLACE YOU IN THE LINEUP THAT SHOWCASES YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT. ONCE THE LINE UP FOR THE PARADE HAS BEEN DETERMINED, YOU WILL RECEIVE A MAP AND LOCATION FOR YOUR PLACE IN THE PARADE. PLEASE ENTER THE PARADE LINE UP ROUTE FROM SOUTH CHURCH AND GO UP BUTLER STREET. PLEASE DO NOT ENTER FROM COLUMBIA AVENUE OR MAIN. TURNING FLOATS AND TRAILORS AROUND IS VERY DIFFICULT. HAYGOOD STREET MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE LINEUP. MAIN STREET WILL BE CLOSED DOWN AT 2:45PM, SO PLEASE BE AT YOUR LOCATION BY 2:30 PM.

(A CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT THE VETERANS MONUMENT FOLLOWING THE PARADE.)

ALL OF THE VETERANS APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

NEED A FLOAT? CONTACT KIRBY FLOATS @ 803-359-3134.
(DISCOUNTS GIVEN TO ALL VETERANS)



DATES TO REMEMBER

September 2nd	V-J Day (1945)
September 5th	Labor Day
September 11th	Patriot's Day 10th Anniversary of 9/11
September 14th	"Star Spangled Banner" written (1814)
September 17th	US Constitution Approved (1787)
September 18th	US Air Force Established (1947)
September 19th	POW/MIA Recognition Day
September 23rd	Autumn Begins
September 28th	VFW Day Established (1899)



New Family Caregiver Benefits

There is a new program provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans to designate a primary family caregiver and secondary family caregivers if needed. Eligible primary family caregivers can receive a stipend, training, mental health services and success to health insurance if they are not already under a health care plan.

Applications can be processed by telephone through the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 or in person through any VAMC. Applications can also be submitted by mail or online at www.caregiver.va.gov with the new Caregiver Application, VA Form 1010-CG.

Caregivers for Veterans of all eras are still eligible for education and training on what it means to be a caregiver, how to best meet the Veteran's care needs, and the importance of self-care when in a care-giving role, and respite care.

CHANGES IN POST-9/11 GI BILL

Effective October 1, 2011:

- ◇ Allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for—
 - * Non-college degree (NCD) programs: Pays actual net cost for in-State tuition and fees at public NCD institution. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$17,500, whichever is less. Also pays up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
 - * On-the-job and apprenticeship training: Pays a monthly benefits amount prorated based on time in program and up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
 - * Flight programs: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less. This limit is applicable to flight programs at both IHLs and non-IHLs.
 - * Correspondence training: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs of in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$8,500, whichever is less.
- ◇ The Post-9/11 GI Bill basic allowance for housing (BAH) is now payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning. The rate will be equal to 1/2 the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents.
 - * The full-time rate for an individual eligible at the 100% eligibility tier would be \$673.50 for 2011.
- ◇ Allows students on active duty to receive a books and supplies stipend.





The Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is the Nation's highest military decoration and is normally bestowed to the recipient by the President of the United States. It is awarded for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.

The Medal was approved by the U.S. Congress in 1863 during the Civil War. It has been awarded in every war since that time to include the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Members of all branches of the Armed Forces are eligible to receive it and there have been over 3000 awarded since 1863, with nineteen people receiving it twice.

Colonel (retired) Charles Murray, pictured above, was a recipient of this Medal and recently passed away. He lived in Columbia for many years and was very active with fellow Veterans and in activities at Fort Jackson. He was also the Grand Marshal at the 2010 Columbia Veteran's Day Parade. He will be missed by family and friends and will be buried at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. With his death there are now 84 living recipients of the Medal of Honor.

KYLE CARPENTER BENEFIT SCHEDULED

Lance Corporal Kyle Carpenter, former United States Marine was severely injured in Afghanistan while trying to save a fellow Marine. He has had numerous surgeries since leaving there and has attended a few public events recently.

There will be a special Bar-B-Q Chicken Dinner for him on Sunday, September 18th from 4 until 7 pm at the Reflections Banquet Hall in Lexington. There is a patriotic program that begins at 5:30pm. This event is supported by the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office and the public is invited.

For more information please call 808-8466. Reflections Banquet Hall is located at 1937 Augusta Highway in Lexington.



The Spirit of America is a free, patriotic, live-action show and takes place at **North Charleston Coliseum** on September 16 and 17, 2011. The history of the Nation will come to life through historical reenactments, musical entertainment and precision military drill.

Historical accounts, taken directly from Soldiers' letters and diaries, provide the story line for this powerful drama, designed to entertain while presenting the history and development of the U.S. Army from its origins through the wars, conflicts and missions that have molded the Army and the Nation.

Spirit of America performances are open to the public and admission is FREE, but tickets are required. Show times are September 16th at 10:30am and 7:30pm and September 17th at 2:00pm and 7:30pm. For tickets call 1-866-239-9425 or online at



Director's Corner (continued from page 1)...

This event changed the way Americans think, act and live. I have a receipt for a watch I bought on September 10, 2011 that I kept. I discovered it recently and thought of throwing it away but then decided to keep it because of the date. The watch is long gone but the receipt reminds me of how innocent we were on September 10th. America will never be the same because of the innocent lives lost that day and of the men and women who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. On September 11 we remember all the heroes who saved so many and all those who died trying to save so many. Let us NEVER forget!

Coming in the Next Issue...

A list of free or reduced meals and other items for Veterans during Veteran's Day week.