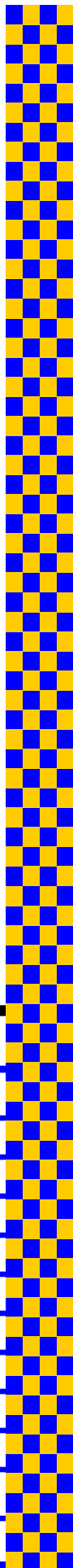




LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

September/October 2017



Lexington, SC.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

At-a-Glance Calendar/From the Director	2
Special Monthly Compensation	3
VA Work Study Allowance	6
On the Job Apprenticeship Training Programs	8
On This Day in History...	11
Happenings in Lexington County	13
Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment	15
The History of Mount Rushmore	18
Forever GI Bill	21
VA Caregiver Support Resumes	25
Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin	26
Featured Medal	28



**At A Glance Calendar
September/October**

For a list of events in Lexington County for September & October

See page 13 - Happenings Around Lexington County

Weekly on Tuesdays in September

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Friday, September 1st

Chapin Outreach

Monday, September 4th

Labor Day
County Office Closed

Wednesday, September 6th through Friday, September 8th

America's Warrior Partnership Symposium

Friday, September 8th

VA Community Mental Health Summit (more information on page 24)

Saturday, September 9th

Dang-it Doll Workshop (more information on page 9)

Sunday, September 10th

Grandparents Day

Monday, September 11th

Patriot Day

Tuesday, September 12th

County Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 13th

Thompson's Veterans Workshop (more information on page 20)

Friday, September 15th

Tunnel to Tower 5k Run & Walk (more information on page 17)

Thursday, September 21st

Blue Star Mother's Suicide Seminar (more information on page 27)

Friday, September 22nd

Autumn Begins

Tuesday, September 26th

County Council Meeting

Friday, September 29th

American Legion Convention

Weekly on Tuesdays in October

Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Thursday, October 5th

Gaston Outreach

Friday, October 6th

Chapin Outreach

Saturday, October 7th through Tuesday, October 10th

AUSA Conference

Monday, October 9th

Columbus Day

Tuesday, October 10th

County Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 10th through Friday, October 13th

SCACVAO fall Conference

Saturday, October 14th

Dang-it Doll Workshop (more information on page 9)

Monday, October 16th

National Bosses Day

Tuesday, October 17th

Military Hiring Fair @ Ft. Jackson (more information on page 10)

Tuesday, October 24th

United Nations Day
County Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 31st

Halloween

From the Director...

As autumn approaches South Carolina, we are reminded of the beginning of school, football season and cooler weather. Let us be mindful and in prayer for our students, teachers, bus drivers and administrators. It is also a time of harvesting apples, pumpkins and other crops. It is my favorite time of year because of these things and it also leads up to Veterans Day, a day that has special meaning for me.

Please remember our Lexington County Veterans Group meets weekly in our building from 10am to 12 noon on Tuesdays. One Tuesday per month they meet at a local restaurant for socialization and camaraderie. Any honorably discharged Veteran is welcome to join this group.

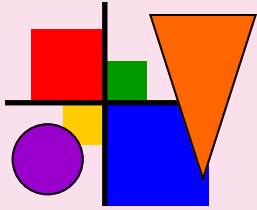
The building renovation is coming along nicely and it is beginning to take shape. The entire face of the front of the building has been changed from a store front to an office front. It looks very different and additional public entrances to the building are forthcoming. Please note the construction entrances have changed to this building and are labeled with signage to indicate how to enter the building. We still anticipate moving into our new office complex in late November/early December time frame. We look forward to a new facility to better serve our Veterans!

It is an honor to serve
Lexington County!

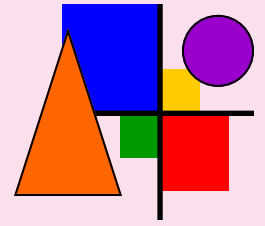


CALENDAR KEY

- Purple—Holidays/Special Days
- Blue—Outreach dates
- Red—County Offices Closed, No van scheduled and Special Notices
- Black—Director's appearances in the County
- Brown—County Council Meetings
- Pink—Special Events throughout the County
- Orange—Director Out of Office
- Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings



Special Monthly Compensation



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) program may provide you with benefits in addition to, or instead of, your disability compensation if you have loss (or loss of use of) a limb, sight, speech, hearing, mobility, sexual organ or functioning, or if you have certain other disabilities. You may also be eligible for SMC if you are unable to leave your house or bed without help, or in need of regular help from another person in your daily activities. Extra VA disability or SMC is given for some especially serious disabilities. The basic idea is that the VA wants to give additional disability pay in cases where the disability is so severe that the regular ratings just are not enough.



Unlike disability compensation, which compensates you for lost wages, SMC compensates you for non-economic losses, such as your personal inconvenience and loss of use of a body part, or body system. SMC is one of the most complex VA programs. SMC is difficult to understand and even experts in Veterans' benefits can find it confusing, so you are not alone if you find the SMC program difficult to figure out.

There are different categories that determine the type and amount of SMC. Each one has different requirements for the kind of conditions that qualify for SMC under that category. For a condition to qualify under any category, it must be determined by the VA to be a service connected disability. There are about 60 levels of SMC divided into nine letter categories: "K", "L", "M", "N", "O", "P", "R", "S", and "T". If you get SMC, the VA will tell you which of these categories of SMC you qualify for. Some of the letter categories also have in-between levels, which are shown by a "1/2" symbol after the letter. The 2017 rates for a single Veteran range from \$103.54 to \$8343.91 per month. For a complete listing for the SMC rates visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/SMC.

There is some specific terminology relating to SMC benefits. This terminology is explained below.
1 – Loss or Loss of Use is described as either an amputation or, having no effective remaining function of an extremity or organ. The disabilities VA can consider for SMC include:

- ◇ loss, or loss of use, of a hand or foot
- ◇ immobility of a joint or paralysis
- ◇ loss of sight of an eye (having only light perception)
- ◇ loss, or loss of use, of a reproductive organ
- ◇ complete loss, or loss of use, of both buttocks
- ◇ deafness of both ears (having absence of air and bone conduction)
- ◇ inability to communicate by speech (complete organic aphonia)
- ◇ loss of a percentage of tissue from a single breast, or both breasts, from mastectomy or radiation treatment



Continued on page 4

Special Monthly Compensation - continued from page 3

2 – Aid and attendance means that the condition is so severe that it requires regular (not necessarily constant) supervision by another person. This person could be a family member, home nurse, or nursing home facility. Hospitalization does NOT qualify as aid and attendance.

3 – Permanently bedridden means that the condition is so severe that the individual cannot get out of bed. This does not include periods of bed rest prescribed by a physician since the individual could still actually get out of bed. Unlike aid and attendance, if an individual is permanently bedridden the rating continues even if they are hospitalized.

The VA will pay higher rates for combinations of these disabilities such as loss or loss of use of the feet, legs, hands, and arms, in specific monetary increments, based on the particular combination of the disabilities. There are also higher payments for various combinations of severe deafness with bilateral blindness. Additional SMC is available if a Veteran is service connected for paraplegia, with complete loss of bowel and bladder control. In addition, if you have other service-connected disabilities that, in combination with the above special monthly compensation, meet certain criteria, a higher amount of SMC can also be considered.

You should contact our office or your local VA regional office for information about applying for SMC. In determining qualifications for SMC, the VA must review the medical evidence regarding the loss or loss of use and then make a decision regarding the level of SMC to be paid.



Lowe's Expands Support Of The Military With Enhanced Discount



Lowe's Companies, Inc. recently announced it will expand its military discount program by offering 10 percent off personal purchases every day to current and honorably discharged members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The new program uses a MyLowe's card for quick identification, is available both in U.S. stores and on Lowes.com and offers easy online enrollment. The discount is effective immediately.

"Lowe's was founded by Carl Buchan, an Army Veteran who wanted to make home building and home improvement affordable for returning GIs and their families," said Robert A. Niblock, chairman, president and CEO. "The values and leadership instilled through his military service formed the foundation of our company. Enhancing our discount program honors his memory and the commitment servicemen and women and their families make to our country."

Lowe's has offered discounts to Veterans and military servicemen and women for more than a decade. Current and former servicemen and women can follow these easy steps to enroll in the discount program:

Visit Lowe's.com/military and complete a short personal profile. Check the box to receive a free MyLowe's card.

After the one-time enrollment, U.S. military customers can present their MyLowe's card at the store cash register, scan their card at self-checkout or sign in to their account at Lowe's.com and receive the discount. In addition to simple checkout in stores and online shopping, the MyLowe's card offers free parcel shipping for purchases ordered online with no required minimum purchase. For additional details about the discount, visit Lowe's.com/military.



IMPORTANT DAV VAN INFORMATION

The van runs on certain Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm.



If you need to schedule a ride on the DAV van, please call the office for dates and space availability at 803-785-8400.



WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER VAN DRIVERS!!!

If you are 18 or older or know someone who may be interested in volunteering to drive the DAV van at least one day a month, please contact the office at 803-785-8400.



The U.S. Department of Treasury, in partnership with the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority and SC Housing Corp., has made over \$295 million available to help eligible South Carolina homeowners avoid serious first mortgage delinquency and foreclosures.

Qualifications

SC Help is intended to assist borrowers who are facing first mortgage delinquency or possible foreclosure. There is no household income limit, the property must be an owner occupied primary residence, applicants must have a minimum 24 months homeownership history and applicants do NOT have to be delinquent.

How to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to apply electronically at: www.schelp.com. Applicants without the internet may call 1-855-435-7472, toll free number for assistance. There is NO FEE required at any point during the SC HELP process.

September is National Mushroom Month!



October is National Pretzel Month!



VA WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE

If you are a full-time or 3/4-time student in a college degree, vocational, or professional program, you can “earn while you learn” with a VA work-study allowance.

The VA work-study allowance is available to persons training on a full-time or ¾ time basis under the following programs:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill--(38 U.S.C. Chapter 33) (Veterans and transfer-of-entitlement recipients)
- Montgomery GI Bill--Active Duty (38 U.S.C. Chapter 30)
- REAP Participants
- Montgomery GI Bill--Selected Reserve (10 U.S.C. Chapter 1606)
- Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (38 U.S.C. Chapter 32)
- Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (38 U.S.C. Chapter 35)
- Eligible dependents under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35 may use work-study only while training in a State.
- National Call to Service Participants
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program -- (38 U.S.C. Chapter 31)

The VA will select students for the work-study program based on different factors. Such factors include:

- Ability of the student to complete the work-study contract before the end of his or her eligibility to education benefits
- Job availability within normal commuting distance to the student

The number of applicants selected will depend on the availability of VA-related work at your school or at VA facilities in your area. Veterans with service-connected disabilities of at least 30% may be given priority consideration. You will earn an hourly wage equal to the Federal minimum wage or your State minimum wage, whichever is greater. If you are in a work-study job at a college or university, your school may pay you the difference between the amount the VA pays and the amount the school normally pays other work-study students doing the same job as you. You may elect to be paid in advance for 40% of the number of hours in your work-study agreement, or for 50 hours, whichever is less. After you have completed the hours covered by your first payment, the VA will pay you each time you complete 50 hours of service OR bi-weekly, whichever comes first. You may work during or between periods of enrollment. You can arrange with the VA to work any number of hours you want during your enrollment. However, the total number of hours you work cannot be more than 25 times the number of weeks in your enrollment period.

Services you perform under a VA work-study program must be related to VA work. Examples of acceptable work are:

- The preparation and processing of necessary papers and other documents at educational institutions
- Any activity at a VA facility
- Any activity at Department of Defense, Coast Guard, or National Guard facilities relating to the administration of Chapters 1606 or 1607 of Title 10 U.S.C.
- Any activity of a State Veterans agency related to providing assistance to Veterans in obtaining any benefit under Title 38, U.S.C. or the laws of the State
- A position working in a Center for Excellence for Veteran Student Success, as established under 20 U.S.C. 1161t, which purpose is to support and coordinate academic, financial, physical, and social needs of Veteran students
- A position working in a cooperative program carried out jointly by the VA and an Institution of Higher Learning
- Any Veterans-related position in an Institution of Higher Learning, such as: (1) Assisting with dissemination of general information regarding Veteran benefits and/or services; (2) Providing assistance to Veteran students with general inquiries about Veteran benefits via phone, email, or in person; or (3) Maintaining and organizing Veteran-related files.

The work you actually do will depend on your interests and the type of work available.

You may apply for the Student Work-Study Allowance Program by completing VA Form 22-8691 and mailing it to the VA Regional Processing Office that handles your education claim, or visit www.gibill.va.gov or you can call them at their toll-free number, 1-888-GIBILL-1(1-888-442-4551).

Medical Expense Reports

For Veterans and Surviving Spouses not receiving the maximum Non-Service Connection Pension or Survivor Benefits, the VA may be able to pay you at a higher rate if you identify expenses the VA considers allowable. Medical and dental expenses paid by you may be deducted from the income the VA counts when determining your benefit entitlement. Any medical or dental expense that you paid for a member of your household (self, spouse, child, etc.) for which you were not reimbursed may also be counted. Expenses may be listed on a VA Form 21P-8416, **Medical Expense Report (MER)**, and submitted anytime for the previous year. For example: Medical Expense Reports for 2016 may be submitted anytime during the calendar year of 2017.

You can contact our office at 803-785-8400 to schedule an appointment for us to help you complete your 2016 MER.

Reports

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**; you can chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is also available.

IT'S YOUR CALL

Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to your Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that is being deposited. If you are changing your direct deposit, you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.



Free counseling for war time Veterans & their dependents

The Columbia Vet Center offers a wide range of services to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian life. You have earned these benefits and there is no cost to you or your family members.

Services provided are:

- Individual & group counseling
- Family counseling for military related
- Bereavement counseling for families
- Military sexual trauma
- Outreach & education
- Substance abuse assessment & referral
- Employment assessment & referral
- VBA benefits explanation & referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues

The Columbia Vet Center is located at 1710-A Richland Street, Columbia. Their telephone number is 803-765-9944.



Job Hunting?

The VA medical center and regional office is hiring Veterans.

Visit USAjobs.com for more information.



On-the-Job & Apprenticeship Training Programs

Both on-the-job (OJT) and apprenticeship training programs are available for Veterans using their VA education benefits, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill. These programs allow Veterans to learn a trade or skill through training on the job participation rather than attending formal classroom instruction. A Veteran generally enters into a training contract for a specific period with an employer or union, and at the end of the training period, the Veteran gains job certification or journeyman status.

Employers generally pay a reduced OJT/apprenticeship wage (must be at least 50% of journeyman wage). Unless the training establishment is operated by a Federal, State, or local government, periodic wage increases must be granted and by the last full month of training, the wage must be at least 85% of the wage for a fully trained employee. Veterans in an approved program can use their GI Bill benefit and receive a tax-free stipend. The Post-9/11 GI Bill stipend is the equivalent of the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) of an E-5 with dependents, which is paid in addition to the entry-level wage.

Stipend for the first six months of training is 100% of your applicable MHA. Stipend for the second six months of training is 80% of your applicable MHA. The stipend is reduced 20% every six months thereafter as the Veteran's wages regularly increase until the Veteran has attained journeyman status and pay. Approved employers can use this benefit as a recruiting tool by using wages + stipend to attract Veteran candidates.

State Approving Agencies (SAA)

The State Approving Agencies are responsible for approving OJT/apprenticeship programs in their respective states. Requirements generally entail submitting a training request form that specifically outlines the proposed program, wages, and standard workweek information, as well as the company contact name and phone number. Once all required documents are submitted, approval is generally completed in 1-2 months.

For more information regarding OJT & apprenticeship programs, and how to apply see: https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/910/kw/apprenticeships.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) OJT/Apprenticeships

In addition to the services listed above, VR&E also provides employers with other benefits through the Special Employer Incentive Program (SEI). Employers hiring Veterans with a service-connected disability who are approved for VR&E services may be entitled reimbursements up to 50% of the Veterans' salary for six months to offset training costs. Additional information about the SEI program is located here: <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/docs/seiflyerfinal.pdf>.



HAPPY GRANDPARENT'S DAY!
Sunday, September 10th



CLOSINGS...

County offices will be closed on the following dates:

Monday, September 4th - Labor Day



Lexington County Veterans Group



All Honorably Discharged Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon in the auditorium at 605 West Main Street in Lexington. The group meets for Health Issues and PTSD counseling with a licensed counselor.

The Veterans group also participates in various social activities such as group lunches, group dinners with wives/significant other, boat trips on Lake Murray, participation in the Lexington County Veterans parade and other general group tours.

Due to the construction in the building, the group is currently meeting off site at different locations. Please check their website for the location of the meeting for that week.



For further information, please visit their website at lex-coveteransgroup.com or contact our office at 803-785-8400.



Dang-it Dolls Workshops

Saturday, September 9th and Saturday, October 14th
from 10am to 3pm at the Cayce Masonic Lodge, 1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.

There is something for everyone to do and this is the one place where
THE MORE THE MERRIER
really counts.

Information on VA home Loans and how to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility

Any Veteran who wants to use their VA loan guaranty benefit must have a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The Veteran's lender needs the COE in order to have the loan guaranty insured.

Current process: There are three ways to apply for a COE

1. The easiest and quickest is to apply through eBenefits. It takes just a few minutes and generally can be printed out by the Veteran.
2. Alternatively and equally simple, the Veteran's lender can gather the required information and apply electronically through a VA hosted loan guaranty website.
3. Last option (if the first two are not possible) is for the Veteran to complete and sign a paper application, then mail it by U.S. Post to their Regional Loan Center of jurisdiction.

For more information on VA home loans, call 1-888-768-2132.



MILITARY HIRING FAIR

CAREER EVENT

Personal Branding • Hiring Fair • Career Planning

Date and Time

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location:

Fort Jackson Solomon Center

6510 Strom Thurmond Blvd.

Fort Jackson, SC 29207

This hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the Columbia Chamber, the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS), the South Carolina Committee of the Employer Support for Guard and Reserve (ESGR), The American Legion, SC DEW, SC Works, NBC News, and other local partners.

A Hiring Our Heroes job seeker employment workshop is led by HR and workforce professionals and covers a variety of topics including resume building, networking, and interview tips, taking into account the job seeker's military background and lifestyle. Hiring Our Heroes digital tools, including the [Resume Engine](#), are also integrated into the workshop curriculum. The workshop begins at 8:30 a.m.

Questions? Contact elombardi@uschamber.com.

REGISTRATION LINK: <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/event/fort-jacksoncolumbia-hiring-fair>

**Employers and Military Job Seekers
register at
HiringOurHeroes.org**



Our Partners



**COLUMBIA
CHAMBER**



NBC NEWS

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

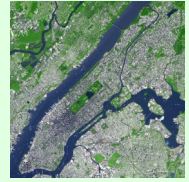
Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of September & October?



September 2, 1789 - The U.S. Treasury was established by Congress.



September 4, 1609 - The island of Manhattan was discovered by navigator Henry Hudson.



September 5, 1997 - Mother Teresa died in Calcutta at the age of 87.



September 11, 2001 - The worse terrorists attack in US history occurred as four large passenger jets were hijacked and then crashed; killing nearly 3,000 people.



September 15, 1916 - Tanks were first used in combat.

September 17, 1930 - Construction began on the Hoover Dam.

U.S. AIR FORCE

September 18, 1947 - The US Air Force was established.



September 23, 1991 - Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union.



September 25, 1789 - The first US Congress proposed 12 Amendments to the Constitution, ten of which, comprising the Bill of Rights, were ratified.



October 1, 1908 - Henry Ford's Model T went on sale for the first time.

October 2, 1968 - California's Redwood National Park was established.



October 4, 1957 - The space race began as Russia launched the first satellite into orbit.

October 13, 1775 - The United States Navy was born



October 20, 1818 - The U.S. and Britain agreed to set the U.S./Canadian border at the 49th parallel.

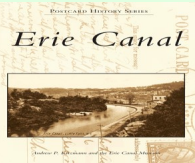


October 21, 1917 - Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie was born in Cheraw, SC.



October 24, 1945 - The United Nations was founded.

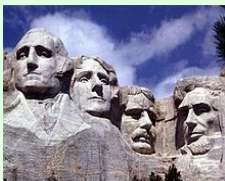
October 26, 1825 - The Erie Canal opened as the first major man-made waterway in America.



October 28, 1919 - The Statue of Liberty was dedicated in New York harbor.



October 31, 1941 - Mt. Rushmore was completed after 14 years of work.



STAYING COOL WHEN IT IS HOT!!!

When we are feeling warm/hot, we perspire. The perspiration evaporates and that allows our bodies to cool. If our bodies do not cool correctly or cool enough, we can feel and become ill. Here are some things we can do to help stay cool.

1. **Dress for it.** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting and light colored clothing. Wear a hat with a brim or use an umbrella to help block out the sun.
2. **Protect yourself.** Do not get too much sun. Wear sunscreen. Wear sunglasses. Avoid being outdoors during the peak sun hours 10 am - 4 pm.
3. **Drink up.** That would be plenty of water. Drink even when you do not feel thirsty. Water or 'sports' drinks are beneficial. Do not drink alcoholic or caffeinated beverages in the warm weather - they can cause dehydration.
4. **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Eat cool foods such as salads. Avoid hot and heavy foods. Try to limit high protein foods. These can increase your metabolic (internal body) heat.
5. **Slow down and take it easy.** Try to avoid strenuous activity. If that is not possible, then do it during the coolest part of the day, before 10AM or after 4PM.
6. **Take a break.** Take regular breaks in the shade or cool area when it is hot.
7. **Stay indoors.** When possible, stay indoors and spend more time in air conditioned places. Find a cooling center. Move your exercise indoors. Walk the air conditioned malls.
8. **Keep the shades down and blinds closed.** Blocking out the sunlight will keep indoor temperatures cooler. Do a minimum of cooking. Use the oven only if absolutely necessary.
9. **If you take medications, talk to your pharmacist.** Ask if you need to be extra careful during the warm weather.



New VA Online Tool Helps Veterans Learn About and Compare Effective PTSD Treatments

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a new online tool this week that will help Veterans compare various treatment options for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The [PTSD Treatment Decision Aid](#) is a free, interactive online tool that helps educate patients about effective treatment options for PTSD and encourages them to participate actively in decisions about their care. The tool includes information about evidence-based PTSD treatments, such as talk therapy and prescription medication options. It also includes useful information designed for people who have served in the military. Users can watch videos of providers explaining different treatment options and what to expect with those treatments, and hear from Veterans who have benefited from them.

Veterans can also build a chart to compare the treatments they prefer and print a personalized summary to share with their providers. All personal information is erased once the tool is closed to protect users' privacy. According to VA findings, approximately eight of every 100 people will experience PTSD at some point in their lifetimes, and almost 620,000 of the Veterans treated by VA have a diagnosis of PTSD.

To learn more about PTSD visit the National Center for PTSD website at ptsd.va.gov. Health-care providers who have questions about the PTSD Treatment Decision Aid or other free resources can call the PTSD Consultation Program at 866-948-7880 or email them at PTSDconsult@va.gov.

POST
TRAUMATIC
STRESS
DISORDER

Happenings Around Lexington County

For the Months of September & October

Saturday, September 2nd
through
Monday, September 4th

38th Annual Chapin Labor Day Festival & Parade

For more information visit their website at
chapin-sc.com/visitors/festivals&events.



Friday, September 15th

Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers 5K Run and Walk

For more information visit their website at
T2TRUN.org.



Friday, September 22nd
through
Saturday, November 4th

Deceased Farms in Lexington (corn maze, etc.)

382 Olde Farm Road, Lexington
Thursday through Sunday nights only
For more information visit their website at
deceasedfarm.com or call them @ 803-530-9434.



Friday, September 29th
through
Saturday, September 30th

44th Annual Irmo Okra Strut

For more information visit their website at
okrastrut.com or call them @ 803-781-7050.



Starts on
Saturday, September 30th

Cayce/West Columbia Jaycees Hall of Horrors

Thursday through Sunday nights
1153 Walter Price Street, Cayce
For more information visit their website at
hallofhorrors.com or call them @ 803-814-5858.



Friday, October 6th
through
Saturday, October 7th

35th Annual Gaston Collard & BBQ Festival

For more information visit their website at
gastonsc.org or call them @ 803-796-7725.



Saturday, October 7th
through
Sunday, October 8th

10th Annual Congaree Bluegrass Festival

Historic Columbia Speedway, Cayce
For more information visit their website at
bluegrassfestivalguide.com/congaree.



Wednesday, October 11th
through
Sunday, October 22nd

South Carolina State Fair

For more information visit their website at
scstatefair.org or call them @ 803-779-3387.



Friday, October 13th
through
Tuesday, October 31st

Gilbert House of Terror

739 Harley Taylor Road
Friday & Saturday nights with some Sunday nights
(Open Halloween Night)
For more information visit their website at
gilberthouseofterror@gmail.com
or call them @ 803-892-5396.



Friday, October 20th
through
Friday, October 30th

Boo-At-The-Zoo

From 6 to 9 pm.
For more information visit their website at
riverbanks.org/events/boo-at-the-zoo.



List of Common Allowable (Recurring) Medical Expenses for an Initial Claim Application

The list below shows recurring VA allowable medical expenses for the initial claim application for pension benefits. The list is not all-inclusive and must be unreimbursed by insurance. They must be paid for by the applicant and are used to reduce outside income that exceeds the VA income limit.

1. Medicare Part B Premiums
2. Medicare Part D Premiums
3. Insurance Premiums for supplemental medical insurance
4. Home Health Services
5. Assisted Living Facility Services
6. Nursing Home Services
7. Long Term Care Insurance
8. Medical Monitoring Program (like Life Alert)



There is a new number to call for billing issues through the VAMC for any private health care that was fee based out. That number is 1-877-881-7618 9am to 5pm EST.



County Council Needs You!

Veterans are still needed to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at County Council meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. County Council meetings start at 4:30pm, so please be present around 4:15pm.



Contact the office at 803-785-8400, if you are interested.

The office would like to thank Gregory Charlton and Ann Marie Chao. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of July and August.

THANKS

Leaves

by Elsie N. Brady

How silently they tumble down
And come to rest upon the ground
To lay a carpet, rich and rare,
Beneath the trees without a care,
Content to sleep, their work well done,
Colors gleaming in the sun.

At other times, they wildly fly
Until they nearly reach the sky.
Twisting, turning through the air
Till all the trees stand stark and bare.
Exhausted, drop to earth below
To wait, like children, for the snow.



Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program

The VA provides a variety of employment and independent living services through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. The VA may provide you with vocational counseling, job search assistance, and other education and training services. To determine whether your military service qualifies you for these services, the VA conducts an evaluation of your interests, aptitudes, abilities, and an assessment of how your disability affects your ability to work. The services the VA provides you are based on the results of your evaluation.

The VA can offer you the support you need in order to pursue a career, develop job skills, or provide job accommodations to help you perform your job. The VR&E program, also known as Chapter 31, provides a range of career services, including:

- * Comprehensive evaluation to determine your abilities, skills, and employment interests
- * Career counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment
- * Employment services, such as job training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work-readiness assistance
- * Assistance in finding and keeping a job, including how to use special employer incentives and job accommodation
- * On-the-Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, college training, and non-paid work experiences

In addition, comprehensive rehabilitation and independent living services are also available if you are severely disabled and not currently ready or able to seek employment.

The VR&E program is specifically for service members and Veterans with service-connected illnesses and injuries. However, you may qualify for career counselling services from the VA if you recently separated from the military or are using VA education benefits. Service members and Veterans are eligible for VR&E services under the following circumstances:

- * You have obtained a service-connected disability rating from the VA of at least 10%, or a pre-discharge disability rating ("memorandum rating") of 20% or more from the VA, **AND**
- * You have received, or will receive, a discharge from service that is other than dishonorable, **OR**
- * You may qualify without a VA rating if you are severely ill or injured and have been referred to a military Physical Evaluation Board or are participating in the DoD/VA Integrated Disability Evaluation System process

In general, you must use all VR&E services within 12 years from the following dates, whichever is later:

- * The date you separated from active military service, **OR**
- * The date the VA officially notified you that you have a qualifying service-connected disability rating

Veterans with service-connected disabilities may apply for VR&E benefits at any time. You may request a memorandum rating from the VA if you have not already received a VA service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a pre-discharge rating of 20% or more from the VA. If it is found that you have a serious employment handicap, you may be entitled to VR&E services even if your rating is less than 20% and/or you have passed your 12-year basic period of eligibility.

After you apply and the VA determines you are eligible for services, the VA will schedule a meeting for you with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). One of the VRC's main responsibilities is to help you develop a rehabilitation plan so you can gain suitable employment or achieve an independent living goal. A rehabilitation plan is an individualized written outline of the services, resources, and criteria that will be used to help you achieve your employment and/or independent living goals. In developing a rehabilitation plan, you and your counselor will select one of five tracks to pursue: reemployment, rapid access to employment, self-employment, employment through long-term services, or independent living services. See the chart below.



Continued on page 16

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program continued from page 15

The VA pays for tuition, fees, books, equipment, tools, or other supplies you need to succeed in your rehabilitation program. During your program, you may qualify for a monthly subsistence allowance to help you meet the additional commuting or living expenses you incur while in a training program. The amount of the allowance is based on your type of training, rate of attendance, and the number of dependents. You will receive this allowance in addition to any VA compensation or military retired pay you may already receive.

To apply for benefits you will need to complete the Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation form (VA Form 28-1900).

Track	Goals of Rehabilitation Plan	Who It Is For
Reemployment	Consultation with the employer, job accommodations, job modification, and case management; coordination and referral for services, such as VA health care, reemployment rights advice, and work adjustment services	Service members leaving active duty due to medical issues and Veterans with service-connected disabilities
Rapid Access to Employment	Job readiness preparation, resume development, job search assistance, employment resource development, job accommodations, and post-employment follow-up	Those who express a desire to seek employment soon after separation or who already have the necessary skills and/or training to be competitive in the job market in an appropriate occupation
Self-employment	Analysis of your business concept, development of a business plan, training in operating a small businesses, marketing and financial assistance, and guidance in obtaining adequate resources to implement the business plan	Those who have limited access to traditional employment, need flexible work schedules, or need an accommodating work environment due to disabling conditions or other life circumstances
Employment Through Long-Term Services	Training and education, including: On-the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, work monitoring, work-study, public-private job partnering, or higher education sufficient to qualify for and enter suitable employment	Those who need specialized training and/or education to obtain and maintain suitable employment
Independent Living Services	Assistive technology, independent living skills training, and connection to community-based services	Those who are not currently ready for employment and need rehabilitation services to live more independently

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

RUN WALK HONOR OUR BRAVEST



Tunnel to Towers
5K RUN & WALK
SOUTH CAROLINA

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF 9/11 HERO, FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN SILLER TO ENSURE THAT **WE NEVER FORGET** AND HONOR THE SACRIFICES OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS AND MILITARY HEROES.



FRIDAY, SEPT. 15TH AT 6:30 PM

START LINE AT DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA (9/11 HISTORICAL MEMORIAL IN THE VISTA) 1101 LINCOLN ST. COLUMBIA, SC 29201

REGISTER NOW! #T2TRUN
T2TRUN.ORG

All proceeds will benefit the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, including our *Building for America's Bravest* program, which builds specially adapted, custom designed *smart homes* for our nation's most catastrophically injured service members.

The History of Mount Rushmore



Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore, a batholith in the Black Hills in Keystone, South Dakota. South Dakota historian Doane Robinson is credited with conceiving the idea of carving the likenesses of famous people into the Black Hills region of South Dakota in order to promote tourism in the region. Robinson's initial idea was to sculpt the "Needles" (several giant natural granite pillars). Sculptor Gutzon Borglum rejected the



Needles because of the poor quality of the granite and strong opposition from Native American groups. They settled on Mount Rushmore, which also has the advantage of facing southeast for maximum sun exposure. Robinson wanted it to feature American West heroes like Lewis and Clark, Red Cloud, and Buffalo Bill Cody, but Borglum decided the sculpture should have broader appeal and chose the four presidents. President Calvin Coolidge insisted that, along with Washington, two Republicans and one Democrat be portrayed. Between October 4, 1927, and October 31, 1941, Borglum along with his son, Lincoln Borglum and 400 workers sculpted the colossal 60 foot (18 m) high carvings of U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln to represent the first 130 years of American history. Borglum selected these presidents because of their role in preserving the Republic and expanding its territory.

Borglum utilized new methods involving dynamite and pneumatic hammers to blast through a large amount of rock quickly, in addition to the more traditional tools of drills and chisels. The carving of Mount Rushmore involved the use of dynamite, followed by the process of "honeycombing", a process where workers drill holes close together, allowing small pieces to be removed by hand. In total, about 450,000 short tons (410,000 t) of rock were blasted off the mountainside, some of which remains in a heap near the base of the mountain. Though it was arduous and dangerous work, no lives were lost during the completion of the carved heads. The image of Thomas Jefferson



was originally intended to appear in the area at Washington's right, but after the work there was begun, the rock was found to be unsuitable, so the work on the Jefferson figure was dynamited, and a new figure was sculpted to Washington's left.

Borglum died from an embolism in March 1941. His son, Lincoln, continued on with the project. Originally, each president was to be depicted from head to waist but insufficient funding forced the carving to end. In total, the entire project cost \$989,992.32.

In 1933, the National Park Service took Mount Rushmore under its jurisdiction. On October 15, 1966, Mount Rushmore was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In a canyon behind the carved faces is a chamber, cut only 70 feet (21 m) into the rock, containing a vault with sixteen porcelain enamel panels. The panels include the text of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, biographies of the four presidents and Borglum, and the history of the U.S. The chamber was created as the entranceway to a planned "Hall of Records"; the vault was installed in 1998. Ten years of redevelopment work culminated with the completion of extensive visitor facilities and sidewalks in 1998, such as a Visitor Center, the Lincoln Borglum Museum, and the Presidential Trail. Maintenance of the memorial requires mountain climbers to monitor and seal cracks annually. The National Park Service, which maintains Mount Rushmore, records upwards of 2 million visitors every year. The memorial park covers 1,278.45 acres (2.00 sq mi; 5.17 km²) and is 5,725 feet (1,745 m) above sea level.





DID YOU KNOW...

The VAMC Dorn now has a food pantry. Any Veteran in need may participate in the program. He or she must contact Voluntary

Services and they will direct you to the food pantry. To contact Voluntary Services call (803) 776-4000 extension 6780.



Mark your calendar...



The 2017 Lexington County Veterans Parade will be held on Sunday, November 5th at 3pm.



For more information, see the parade application on page 22.

Join us in celebrating the 15th Year!!

OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES



Batesburg/Leesville Outreach is the 2nd Friday of the month at the Batesburg/Leesville Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Chapin Outreach is the 1st Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach is the 1st Thursday of the month at the Gaston Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



*Appointments are strongly encouraged.
Call the office at 803-785-8400 to schedule a time.*

SPECIAL NOTE

THERE WILL BE NO GASTON OUTREACH IN SEPTEMBER & NO BATESBURG/LEESVILLE OUTREACH IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER.

Just A Reminder...



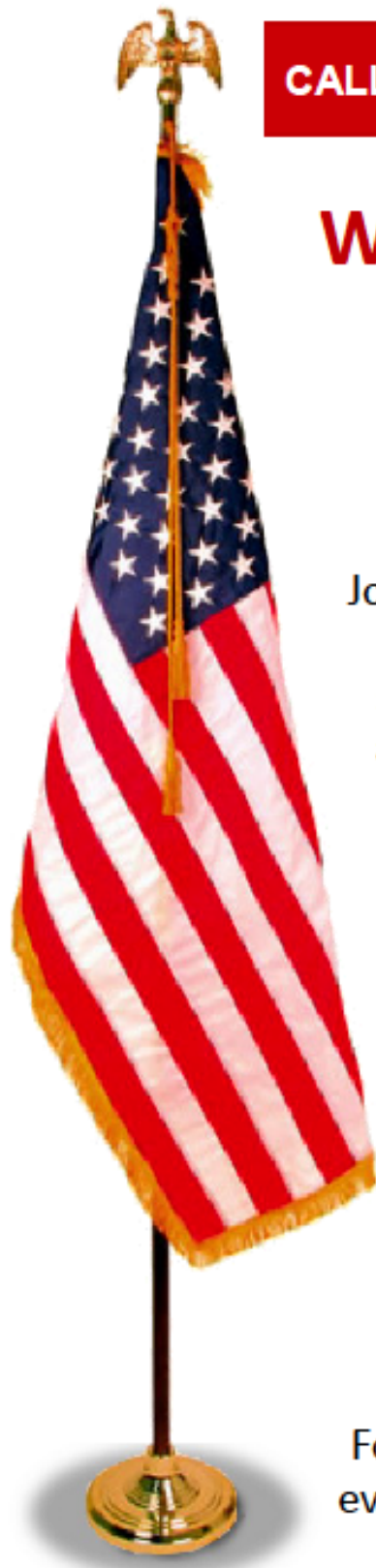
Active and retired military personnel and their dependents with proper military ID will be admitted **FREE** the entire 12 days of the fair. This is in appreciation for their service to our country and its citizens.

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 11th and runs through Sunday, October 22nd.

For more information visit their website at scstatefair.org or call them at 803-779-3387.





CALLING ALL VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES!

Wednesday, September 13
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Thompson Funeral Home
200 State Street, West Columbia

Join us for a free informational seminar to learn more about resources for veterans and their spouses, and get answers to veterans' issues and questions. Refreshments will be served.

Presenters include the following:

- **Ed Lundeen**, Director of Veterans Affairs in Lexington County
- **Cristina Roberson**, Caregiver Support Coordinator for Dorn Medical Center
- **Haylee Anderson**, for First Light Home Care
- **Brian Gargis**, Funeral Director and Cremation Specialist for Thompson Funeral Home

For additional information, or to register for this event, please contact Mary Beth at **803-996-1023** or **info@thompsonsfuneral.com**.



Forever GI Bill

The Harry W. Colmery
Veterans Educational Assistance Act

On August 16, 2017, in Bedminster, New Jersey, President Trump signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act also known as the “Forever GI Bill,” which will bring significant changes to Veterans education benefits. The law is named after the American Legion national commander who wrote the original GI Bill language in 1944, and will allow more Veterans to use the GI Bill and more time to use it. Some of the changes will go into effect immediately, and some are written to go into effect shortly after.

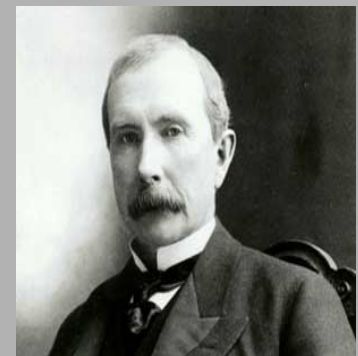
Some new provisions that go into effect immediately include:

- The 15-year time limitation for using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits is eliminated for Veterans who left active duty on or after January 1, 2013, and qualifying dependents (Fry children who became eligible on or after January 1, 2013 and all Fry spouses).
- Reservists who had eligibility under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) and lost it due to the program sunset provision will have that service credited toward the Post-9/11 GI Bill program.
- Certain work-study is permanently authorized; previously it had to be re-approved by Congress every few years.
- The VetSuccess on Campus program will be available to students across the country
- The VA will help Veterans to more clearly identify schools that offer them priority enrollment

The majority of the changes enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Service Members, Families and Survivors. Simple breakdowns to a portion of the provisions can be found at www.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIBSummaries.



*“I believe in the dignity of labor,
whether with head or hand;
that the world owes no man a living but
that it owes every man
an opportunity to make a living.”
-John D. Rockefeller*



2017 LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS PARADE APPLICATION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2017 @ 3:00PM

(RAIN DATE OF SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH)

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 15TH YEAR

Grand Marshals will be the Palmetto Base United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.

NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 21st, PLEASE

(IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE GIVE ME A 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! PLEASE DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS AND YOU CAN PARK AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT FOR PICK UP. PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE UP SPACES AT MCDONALD'S FOR PARKING. PARADE ROUTE WILL LINE UP AT HAYGOOD AND WEST BUTLER STREET, 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 Veterans Parade
Attn: Sharon Willis
212 South Lake Drive Ste 302
Lexington SC 29072
swillis@lex-co.com

For More Information Contact:

Lexington Veterans Affairs Office 803-785-8400
Sharon Willis @ 803-785-1454
Cell # 803-237-9617
Fax # 803-785-8300

Applications can also be found on the Lexington County VA website.

EVERYTHING WILL BE DONE TO PLACE YOU IN THE LINEUP THAT SHOWCASES YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT. ONCE THE LINEUP 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 TRAILERS AROUND IS VERY DIFFICULT. HAYGOOD STREET MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE LINEUP. MAIN STREET WILL BE CLOSED DOWN AT 2:45 SO PLEASE BE AT YOUR LOCATION BY 2:30.

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

**ALL OF THE VETERANS APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT
AND
THEY THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

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

DID YOU KNOW...



Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters.

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.

News Tidbits from the VA

The VAMC Dorn has been awarded \$80 million in construction projects. This includes a new eye clinic, mental health clinic, prosthetic clinic, a Fisher House and several other projects. All construction should break ground next year.



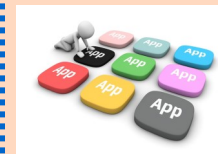
There is a new extension for Patient Advocates at Dorn VAMC. The new extension is ext. 6937. To reach a patient advocate call 803-776-4000 ext. 6937. The caller would need to

leave a voicemail if the intake person is on the line or with someone. The voicemail will be returned within 48 hours.

When you use My HealthVet, you're in good company. Veterans and caregivers use this to manage their health care, refill their prescriptions, exchange secure messages



and even learn about different conditions and ailments. Check out the number of secure messages sent, the number of My HealthVet users and even the number of refills requested and more on the updated My HealthVet date page. Their website is www.myhealth.va.gov/webusers.



Veterans at over 100 VAMCs across the country are now able to use the new Veteran Appointment Request (VAR) App to request or schedule certain appointments online. VAR is a web application that is also accessible via smartphones, tablets and desktops. Visit mobile.va.gov/appstore to find the app.



About Our Office

On March 22, 1945 the SC General Assembly adopted a bill creating a VA office in each of the State's 46 counties. The Lexington County VA Director is appointed by the Lexington County delegation. This office is employed by Lexington County; not the Federal VA. The Lexington County Veterans' Affairs Office is an advocate for Veterans and their surviving dependents. We provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and for VA medical care. The Lexington County VA Office assists former and present members of the US Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: service connected disabilities and non-service connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits. We are not trained in Social Security or Department of Defense Benefits but can assist with some of these forms. Our office also provides off-site appointments at three of the County libraries once a month and we can provide home visits on a case by case basis.

The VA has a website anyone can access for all VA questions, SEP user guides, regulations, policies, laws and any other VA resources. The website is:
www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov

Website

DID YOU KNOW...



The VA has lifted it's hiring freeze. They are now hiring VSRs and call center employees at VA regional offices and the VAMCs are hiring multiple positions. Please visit www.va.gov/jobs for more information.

There are approximately 160 social workers that work at Dorn VA Medical Center and their affiliated outpatient clinics.



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO:

SIXTH ANNUAL VA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT 2017



***IMPROVING ACCESS
PREVENTING SUICIDE
TREATING SUBSTANCE ABUSE
UNITING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES***

*An event to bring those in government and community
together to collaborate for our Veterans.*

September 8th, 2017, 8 – 3pm (Registration begins @ 7:30)

Medallion Center, Columbia

7309 Garners Ferry Rd (Behind the Holiday Inn)

RSVP by 8/18/2017 by registering on the following:

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/VHA2/VACommunityMental>

[HealthSummit](#)

**Understanding the
Relationship Among
Opiate Use and
Suicide Prevention**

Sponsored by :

*WJB Dorn VAMC &
Canteen Services*

*American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention*

Blue Star Blue Mothers

SC Association of LPC

SC National Guard

**If exhibiting in
our Networking Fair,
submit your information
on registration form.**

**(Note, there are limited
tables for the
networking fair so first
come first serve. Also,
Conference registration
limited to 175)**

Networking Fair

**8:00 – 8:30 am
2:00-3:00 pm**

Program begins @8:30

Questions?

Michelle.andra2@va.gov



LABOR DAY

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

Through the years the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From these, a movement developed to secure state legislation. By 1894, 31 states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership — *the American worker.*

COLUMBUS DAY



Columbus Day first became an official state holiday in Colorado in autumn of 1905, and became a federal holiday in the United States in 1937, though people have celebrated Columbus's voyage since the colonial period. In 1792, New York City and other U.S. cities celebrated the 300th anniversary of his landing in the New World. President Benjamin Harrison called upon the people of the United States to celebrate Columbus Day on the 400th anniversary of the event. During the four hundredth anniversary in 1892, teachers, preachers, poets and politicians used Columbus Day rituals to teach ideals of patriotism. These patriotic rituals took themes such as citizenship boundaries, the importance of loyalty to the nation, and celebrating social progress. Since 1970, the holiday has been fixed to the second Monday in October. It is generally observed nowadays by banks, the bond market, the U.S. Postal Service, other federal agencies, most state government offices, many businesses, and most school districts.

VA Caregiver Support Resumes

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is resuming full operations of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The resumption follows an April 17 decision to temporarily suspend certain clinical revocations from the program to conduct a strategic review aimed at strengthening the program.

“The VA has taken immediate steps to improve the program’s operations,” said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. M.D. “Our top focus during the review has been to listen, evaluate and act swiftly to make changes that will better meet the needs of our Veterans and caregivers. This does not mean our work is done. We will continue to refine and improve this important program.”

The VA’s three-month review indicated a need for better communication about clinical revocations, improved internal processes and procedures, and additional staff training.

Following the review, the VA issued a new directive outlining staff responsibilities, Veteran and caregiver eligibility requirements, available and procedure for revocations from the program.

The VA also conducted mandatory staff training on the new directive and implemented standardized communications and outreach material to educate Veterans and caregivers about the program.

Additionally, the VA will be formalizing additional ways to ensure that the experience of Veterans’ families, caregivers and survivors are understood and that, where needed, new, or additional assistance is explored. The VA is committed to listening to the voices of those who care for Veterans of all eras and to collaborating to improve services, outreach and awareness.

The caregiver program website has also been redesigned, and now includes a section linking caregivers and Veterans of all ages to resources and home-based and community-based services available through VA’s Geriatrics and Extended Care program.

More information on the program is available at www.caregiver.va.gov

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin



“A Lasting Memento of the Nation’s Thanks!”

Front



Back



Purpose: To recognize, thank and honor United States military veterans who served during the Vietnam War.

Eligibility: Living United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin.

Presentation: These lapel pins will be presented in a dignified manner to each Vietnam veteran during public events held in their communities by Commemorative Partners. Accompanying remarks should reflect the nation’s thanks for their service and sacrifice. In the rare instance when an honoree cannot attend a public event, the pin may be presented during a private ceremony.

Symbolism:

- **Eagle** - The eagle represents courage, honor, and dedicated service to our nation. As one of the most recognizable and notable American symbols, it is emblazoned with distinction on numerous military insignia.
- **Blue Circle** - The color blue matches the canton of the American flag and signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice. The circle shape and blue color also match the official seal of the Commemoration.
- **Laurel Wreath** - A time-honored symbol representing victory, integrity, and strength.
- **Stripes** - The stripes behind the eagle represent the American flag.
- **Stars** - The six stars represent the six allies who served, sacrificed, and fought alongside one another: Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the United States.
- **Message** - “A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You” is embossed on the back, closest to the heart of the wearer. Also, the official name of the Commemoration is included to remind each veteran that this is a national initiative, and this lapel pin is the nation’s lasting memento of thanks.

Published: August 2016

www.vietnamwar50th.com

You may stop by our office to pick up your commemorative pin.



*SUICIDE DOES NOT
CARE, BUT WE ALWAYS
WILL*

IN RECOGNITION OF

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

THE BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF THE MIDLANDS

INVITE YOU

TO JOIN US

AT

FLIGHT DECK, LEXINGTON

6:00 PM

SEPTEMBER 21, 2017



TO HEAR

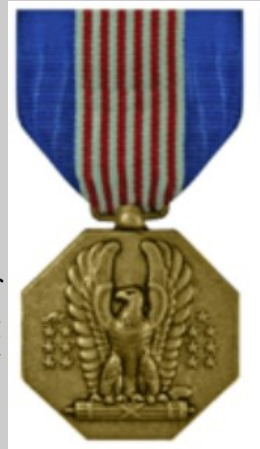
SFC CHRISTOPHER ALLEN

*SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER*

*THE GREEN ROOM AT THE FLIGHT DECK WILL BE READY FOR
US AT 5:30PM*

YOUR MEAL WILL BE DUTCH

Featured Medal: Soldier's Medal



The Soldier's Medal is a military award of the United States Army. It was introduced as Section 11 of the Air Corps Act, passed by the Congress of the United States on July 2, 1926. The criteria for the medal are: "The Soldier's Medal is awarded to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States or of a friendly foreign nation who, while serving in any capacity with the Army of the United States, distinguished himself or herself by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy."

The distinguishing criteria for the award of the Soldier's Medal as per Army Regulation 600-8-22 states that "The performance must have involved personal hazard or danger and the voluntary risk of life under conditions not involving conflict with an armed enemy. Awards will not be made solely on the basis of having saved a life." It is the highest honor a soldier can receive for an act of valor in a non-combat situation, held to be equal to or greater than the level which would have justified an award of the Distinguished Flying Cross had the act occurred in combat. Any American service member who is eligible for retirement pay will receive an increase of 10 percent in retirement pay, if the level of valor was equal to that which would earn the Distinguished Service Cross.

The first medals were awarded on October 17, 1927 to John F. Burns and James P. Martin, for heroism during a fire and to James K. Wilson and Cleophas C. Burnett for saving people from drowning.

Notable recipients of the Soldier's Medal include Colin Powell, who was awarded the decoration during his second tour in Vietnam (1968–69) when he was injured in a helicopter crash and, despite his wounds, rescued two comrades from the burning wreckage. In 1998 three soldiers were awarded with this medal for their intervention in the My Lai Massacre (1968), including threatening to fire on their own army's troops to make them halt their murderous rampage. They were Hugh Thompson, Jr., Lawrence Colburn and Glenn Andreotta; Andreotta was awarded the decoration posthumously. In 2001, following the terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the U.S. Army issued an unprecedented number of these awards (28), to personnel who risked their own lives to assist their fellow comrades in the wake of the attack.

At least one hundred Soldier's Medals have been issued since the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Soldier's Medal is considered to be equivalent to the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the Airman's Medal, and the Coast Guard Medal.

**September is National
Baby
Safety
Month!**



**October is Breast
Cancer
Awareness
Month!**



Coming in the Next Issue...

Education benefits; ebenefits; & home loans