



# LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

*"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"*

September/October 2018



Lexington, SC.

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**At a Glance Calendar  
September/October**

For a list of events in Lexington County for September/October	See page 16 Happenings Around Lexington County
Weekly on Tuesdays in September	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon
Monday, September 3rd	Labor Day County Offices Closed
Thursday, September 7th	Gaston Outreach
Saturday, September 8th	Dang-it Doll Workshop For more information, see page 6
Sunday, September 9th	Grandparents Day
Tuesday, September 11th	Patriot Day County Council Meeting
Friday, September 14th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach SC Tunnel to Towers Run/Walk For more information, see page 10
Saturday, September 22nd	First Day of Fall
Tuesday, September 25th	County Council Meeting
Weekly on Tuesdays in October	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon
Monday, October 1st through Friday, October 5th	Director out of office due to SCACVAO Fall Conference in Greenville
Monday, October 8th	Columbus Day
Tuesday, October 9th	County Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 10th through Sunday, October 21st	SC State Fair for more information, see page 12
Friday, October 12th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, October 13th	Dang-it Doll Workshop For more information, see page 6
Tuesday, October 23rd	County Council Meeting
Monday, October 29th through Tuesday, October 30th	Director out of the office due to National Veterans Advocacy & Leadership Summit in Greenville
Wednesday, October 31st	Halloween

**From the Director...**

A new school year is upon us and all the excitement that goes with that, as well as the diligent work of our educators. Please support our kids and teachers and let them know you appreciate them. In my family, there are many teachers and I deeply appreciate what they do every day.

Please drop in to see our new office and all of the room we have for the future. This is YOUR County VA office and we want you to be as proud of it as we are. We are located up front in the same building and now have our own public entrance. Please let us know what you think of these facilities that County leadership approved and supports. Please let County leadership know how you feel about the new VA office.

The VA has a new Secretary, Robert Wilkie and he is a Veteran. The new Undersecretary for the VA, Paul Lawrence, is also a Veteran and both of them are serious about changing the culture of the VA to user friendly and more customer oriented. They are diligently putting a talented team together to ensure the road ahead is one of listening to Veterans about their concerns and getting out to visit Veteran hospitals and clinics.

As we gear up for fall season and college football, regardless of who your team is, we can all cheer for the athletes who play their hearts out. We wish for success in their academic and athletic endeavors.

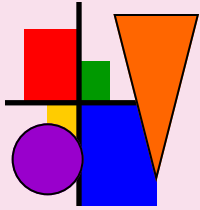


Enjoying the journey,

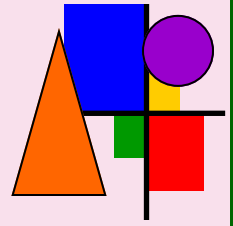
**CALENDAR KEY**

Purple—Holidays/Special Days	Brown—County Council Meetings
Blue—Outreach dates	Pink—Special Events throughout the County
Red—County Offices Closed, and Special Notices	Orange—Director Out of Office
Black—Director's appearances in the County	Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings





# *Debt Management*



Veterans, members of the Armed Forces and family members who incur debts as a result of their participation in most VA compensation, pension and education programs, as well as home loans closed before January 1, 1990, receive letters from the Debt Management Center notifying them of their rights as well as their obligation to reimburse the Department of Veterans Affairs. If you have a debt with the VA, you may have questions concerning payment plans, amounts offset from your benefit payments and what to do if payment of the debt would cause hardship.

**Have you received a collection letter from the Department of the Treasury giving you 10 days to make payment in order to avoid further collection action?**

If Treasury has sent you this letter, sending a payment directly to the VA will delay posting of the payment and will not stop Treasury from adding fees to the amount you owe. Questions regarding Treasury collection should be directed to the telephone number on the Treasury collection letter.

**Have you received a collection letter or phone call from a private collection agency or law firm regarding your VA debt?**

This means the Department of the Treasury has referred your account for private collection. Sending payment directly to the VA will delay posting of those payments to your account and will not prevent fees from being charged by the collection agencies or law firms.

**Do you have a question about a VA medical co-payment?**

The Debt Management Center does not collect nor have information concerning medical billing statements. If you wish to make a VA medical co-payment go to <https://www.pay.va.gov/>. If you need help completing the co-payment form please call 1-866-400-1238.



**Do you have multiple Post 9/11 G.I. Bill education debts? If you do, please follow these simple instructions:**

**IF YOU ARE PAYING BY MAIL:** If you want to send one check for multiple debts, please enclose the remittance stub for each debt. The deduction code tells the VA which debt you are paying (advance payment, housing allowance, tuition and fees, etc.). If you do not have the collection letter, send a note listing the debts and the amount you want applied to each one.

**IF YOU ARE PAYING BY PLASTIC CARD OR ACH DEBIT:** Please pay each debt separately at the online payment site, <https://www.pay.va.gov/>. Anyone receiving monthly compensation, pension, or education benefits should call the Debt Management Center before making an online payment. This way you can be sure you are not overpaying your debt in the event they have offset your other benefits.

Normal business hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., (Central Time).



Continued on page 4

## Debt Management continued from page 3

DMC contact information is 1-800-827-0648 or International callers 1-612-713-6415.

**E-mail:** dmc.ops@va.gov

**Write:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Debt Management Center  
P.O. Box 11930  
St. Paul, MN 55111



Pay Online: <https://www.pay.va.gov/> to pay the amount you owe using major credit cards, your debit card or ACH Debit from your bank account.

### Submit A Request for Waiver of Debt

#### What is a waiver?

When you request a waiver, you are requesting that the VA terminate collection action on a debt. If a waiver is granted in full or part, you will not be required to pay the amount that was waived.

#### What are the eligibility requirements for a waiver of a debt?

To be eligible for waiver considerations, you must be a Veteran, a payee or beneficiary including a fiduciary, a representative acting on behalf of a debtor such as a parent, sibling, or a representative of an estate in the case of a deceased payee.



#### How do you apply for a waiver of debt?

To apply for a waiver, you must submit the following items:

- Written letter that explains why you are requesting a waiver. The letter should explain why you feel you should not be held responsible for payment of the debt or why collection of the debt would be unfair and create a financial hardship.
- Completed and signed Financial Status Report form

Mail your waiver and your completed and signed Financial Status Report form to:

US Department of Veterans Affairs  
Debt Management Center  
P.O. Box 11930  
St. Paul, MN 55111

#### Can I request an oral hearing?

You have a right to request an oral hearing in conjunction with your waiver request. If you choose to have an oral hearing to present evidence before your request is considered, state so in your request for a waiver. If you request an oral hearing, you will be notified of the date, time, and location, prior to your waiver request being referred for consideration.

#### Are there time limitations associated with the waiver request?

• **Education, Pension and Disability Waiver Request** If you are requesting a waiver for an education, pension or disability compensation debt, you must submit your request within 180 days of the date you were originally notified of your debt.

**Loan Guaranty Waiver Requests** For loan guaranty program debts, you have one year from the date you sign the certified mail receipt for the original notification letter.

Note: If the VA receives your request for waiver within 30 days of the day of notification, they will suspend any offset action from your current benefits until a decision regarding your request for waiver is rendered.

Continued on page 5



"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

-John F. Kennedy



## September is National Chicken Month!



## October is National Apple Month!



### **Debt Management continued from page 4**

#### **What does it mean when your waiver is granted?**

If a waiver is granted in full or part, you will not be required to pay the amount that was waived. A waiver cannot be granted if the VA determines there is:

- Fraud
- Misrepresentation
- Bad faith on your part that led to the creation of the debt

#### **How are you notified of your waiver decision?**

You will be notified in writing when a decision regarding your request for waiver is rendered.

• **Denied Waiver Request** If your request is denied, you will be notified in writing of your appeal rights.

• **Full Waiver Granted** If your request is granted in full, you will be notified in writing and no further collection action will be taken.

• **Partial Waiver Granted** If a partial waiver is granted, you will be notified in writing of the balance and you will be provided appeal rights.

Note: If a balance exists on your account after waiver action is completed, you will be asked to contact the VA and make arrangements to pay your debt. If you are drawing VA benefits, action will be taken to begin offsetting those benefits to recoup any balance that was not waived.



*Thank you for serving!*

## 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.

On the second Tuesday of each month, they meet at a different local restaurant for food and fellowship. Check their website for the location.

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.



## Veteran Wives Support Group

**Meets 1st Friday of each month**

**2 to 4pm**

**Crossroads Counseling Center**

**130A Whiteford Way**

**Lexington, SC 29072**

*For further information, please visit their website at [lex-coveteransgroup.com](http://lex-coveteransgroup.com) or contact our office at 803-785-8400.*



## Dang-it Dolls Workshops

Saturday, September 8th and Saturday, October 13th  
from 10am to 2pm 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.

**September is  
World Alzheimer's  
Awareness Month!**



**World  
Alzheimer's  
Month**

**#RememberMe**  
[www.worldalzmonth.org](http://www.worldalzmonth.org)

**October is  
National Breast Cancer  
Awareness Month!**



**National  
Breast  
Cancer  
Awareness  
Month**

# 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 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 16, 1908** - General Motors was founded in Flint, Michigan.



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

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



**September 26, 1774** - American folk legend, Johnny Appleseed was born in Leominster, Massachusetts.

**September 30, 1955** - Actor James Dean was killed in a car crash in California at the age of 24.

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

**October 8, 1871** - The great fire in Chicago erupted.

**October 13, 1775** - The United States Navy was born after the Second Continental Congress authorized the acquisition of a fleet of ships.

**October 16, 1701** - Yale University was founded in Killingworth, Connecticut (as the Collegiate School of Connecticut).

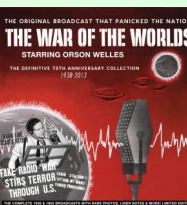
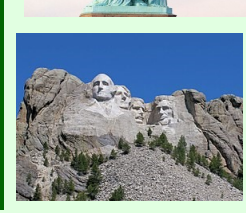
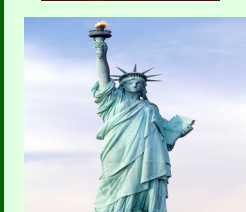
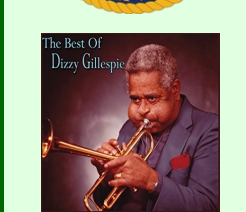
**October 21, 1917** - Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie was born in Cheraw, SC.

**October 24, 1945** - The United Nations was founded.

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

**October 30, 1938** - The War of the Worlds radio broadcast panicked millions of Americans.

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



## Dental Benefits for Veterans

Dental benefits are provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) according to law. In some instances, the VA is authorized to provide extensive dental care, while in other cases treatment may be limited. This Fact Sheet describes dental eligibility criteria and contains information to assist Veterans in understanding their eligibility for VA dental care.

### Outpatient Dental Program

The eligibility for outpatient dental care is not the same as for most other VA medical benefits and is categorized into classes. If you are eligible for VA dental care under Class I, IIA, IIC, or IV you are eligible for any necessary dental care to maintain or restore oral health and masticatory function, including repeat care. Other classes have time and/or service limitations.

If you:	You are eligible for:	Through
Have a service-connected compensable dental disability or condition.	Any needed dental care	Class I
Are a former prisoner of war.	Any needed dental care.	Class IIC
Have service-connected disabilities rated 100% disabling, or are unemployable and paid at the 100% rate due to service-connected conditions.	Any needed dental care. [Please note: Veterans paid at the 100% rate based on a temporary rating, such as extended hospitalization for a service-connected disability, convalescence or pre-stabilization are not eligible for comprehensive outpatient dental services based on this temporary rating].	Class IV
Apply for dental care within 180 days of discharge or release (under conditions other than dishonorable) from a period of active duty of 90 days or more during the Persian Gulf War era.	One-time dental care if your DD214 certificate of discharge does not indicate that a complete dental examination and all appropriate dental treatment had been rendered prior to discharge.*	Class II
Have a service-connected non-compensable dental condition or disability resulting from combat wounds or service trauma.	Any dental care necessary to provide and maintain a functioning dentition. A Dental Trauma Rating (VA Form 10-564-D) or VA Regional Office Rating Decision letter (VA Form 10-7131) identifies the tooth/teeth/condition(s) that are trauma rated.	Class IIA
Have a dental condition clinically determined by VA to be associated with and aggravating a service-connected medical condition.	Dental care to treat the oral conditions that are determined by a VA dental professional to have a direct and material detrimental effect to your service connected medical condition.	Class III
Are actively engaged in a 38 USC Chapter 31 vocational rehabilitation program.	Dental care to the extent necessary as determined by a VA dental professional to: Make possible your entrance into a rehabilitation program Achieve the goals of your vocational rehabilitation program Prevent interruption of your rehabilitation program Hasten the return to a rehabilitation program if you are in interrupted or leave status Hasten the return to a rehabilitation program of a Veteran placed in discontinued status because of illness, injury or a dental condition, or Secure and adjust to employment during the period of employment assistance, or enable you to achieve maximum independence in daily living.	Class V

Continued on page 9



**Dental care continued from page 8**

Are receiving VA care or are scheduled for inpatient care and require dental care for a condition complicating a medical condition currently under treatment.	Dental care to treat the oral conditions that are determined by a VA dental professional to complicate your medical condition currently under treatment.	Class VI
Are an enrolled Veteran who may be homeless and receiving care under VHA Directive 2007-039.	A one-time course of dental care that is determined medically necessary to relieve pain, assist you to gain employment, or treat moderate, severe, or complicated and severe gingival and periodontal conditions.	Class IIB

*\* Note: Public Law 83 enacted June 16, 1955, amended Veterans' eligibility for outpatient dental services. As a result, any Veteran who received a dental award letter from VBA dated before 1955 in which VBA determined the dental conditions to be non-compensable are no longer eligible for Class II outpatient dental treatment.*

**Inpatient Dental Program**

Veterans receiving hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care will be provided dental services that are professionally determined by a VA dentist, in consultation with the referring physician, to be essential to the management of the patient's medical condition under active treatment.

**Additional Information**

For more information about eligibility for VA medical and dental benefits, contact VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/>.



**Toasted Pumpkin Seeds**

Prep 10 m Cook 1 h

**HINT: Boil the pumpkin seeds in salted water for 10 minutes prior**

**Ingredients**

- 2 cups raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 1/4 teaspoons seasoned salt

**Directions**

- 1-Preheat the oven to 250 degrees F (120 degrees C).
- 2-Rinse the pumpkin seeds and pat dry. Place them in a bowl. Add the Worcestershire sauce, melted butter and seasoned salt; stir until evenly coated. Spread out in an even layer on a baking sheet.

**“Why I Served Series”**

Our County Public Information Officer, Harrison Cahill, has started a “Why I Served Series.” He would like to record some video stories of Veterans explaining why they served. If you are interested or know of a Veteran who would be, please call Harrison at (803) 212-5553 to set this up. He records the interviews in our new conference room, where you will have privacy and can take your time in being interviewed. Harrison usually pares down these interviews to three to five minute videos that are shown on the Lexington County Facebook page.



**Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?**

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

**Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 or text 838255.**

The Veterans Crisis line is a free, anonymous, confidential resource that's available to anyone, even if you're not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare. The Veterans Crisis Line does not charge for texting to 838255, but message and data rates may apply.

# HONOR OUR BRAVEST



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. 14, 2018, 7:00 PM**

**COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN CONVENTION CENTER  
COLUMBIA, SC 29201**

**T2TRUN.ORG**

All proceeds will benefit the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, including our Smart Home Program, which builds specially adapted, custom designed homes for our nation's most catastrophically injured service members.

**#T2TRUN**

## **The VA Updates the Disability Rating Schedule Related to Skin Conditions**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated portions of the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD, or Rating Schedule) that evaluate conditions related to the skin. The VASRD is the collection of federal regulations used by Veterans Benefits Administration claims processors to evaluate the severity of disabilities and assign disability ratings. The VA is in the process of updating all 15 body systems of the VASRD to reflect modern medicine more accurately and provide clearer rating decisions. With modern medicine advancing at a rapid rate, it is important to ensure that the VA's disability rating schedule and rating decisions reflect these advancements.

No conditions were removed from the new skin-rating schedule. However, several diagnostic codes were restructured or revised. The complete list of updates to the rating schedule for skin conditions is now available online at [benefits.va.gov/warms/book.asp](https://benefits.va.gov/warms/book.asp). Claims pending prior to August 13, 2018, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to the Veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after August 13, 2018, will be rated under the new rating schedule.

By updating the rating schedule for skin conditions, the VA claims processors can make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure Veterans understand these decisions. The VA has issued several VASRD updates since September 2017, including updates for dental and oral conditions; conditions related to the endocrine system; gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast; and eye conditions.

## **The VA & Walgreens collaborate to improve care coordination for Veterans**

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to improve care coordination for Veterans, the VA is working with pharmacy services provider Walgreens to coordinate patient and pharmaceutical care for VA-enrolled patients.

With the click of a button, VA providers will be able to see the entire medication and immunization history of VA-enrolled patients who receive their prescription and immunization needs at Walgreens.

As it expands its community care program, the VA actively refines its ability to track medication prescribed by community providers. Prior to the arrangement, the VA providers would ask patients to inform them about medications filled at Walgreens. With the VA-Walgreens exchange, the VA providers can now easily view medications directly that are prescribed to VA-enrolled patients by community providers and filled at Walgreens pharmacies.

For the past five years, the VA and Walgreens have partnered to provide flu shots at no cost for enrolled Veterans, improving vaccination rates and access to immunizations. The VA exchanges standards-based medical information securely and electronically with participating community health care partners, such as Walgreens, to ensure the best possible care coordination and medication management.

Currently, the VA exchanges health information with over 170 community health care partners, representing 1,288 hospitals, 537 Federally Qualified Health Centers, 261 nursing homes, 8,649 pharmacies (including over 8,000 Walgreens pharmacies) and over 22,431 clinics.

## VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals Resolves Record Number of Claims

Underscoring the VA's pledge to reduce the wait time for those appealing disability benefits claims, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, as of May 27, 2018, has signed more than 53,650 decisions to date in fiscal year (FY) 2018, which is approximately 86 percent more than the 28,839 decisions signed through the same period last year. The Board is currently on track to meet and exceed its FY 2018 total goal of reviewing a historic 81,000 appeals by September 30, 2018. This pace paves the way for implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act, which has a target implementation date of February 14, 2019, and will offer Veterans more choice and control over their claims and appeals process.

In FY 2017, Congress allocated the Board approximately \$42 million, which was used to hire additional staff, primarily more than 200 decision-writing attorneys and 24 Veterans law judges. The increase in staff, along with streamlining several processes, contributed to the result.

The VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals' mission is to conduct hearings and decide appeals in a timely manner. The VA's disability appeals process is a complex, multi-step adjudication process that uses "open records," which allows Veterans to submit medical and lay evidence at any point from the beginning to the end of the process, including while the claim is pending on appeal; this may, in turn, require the VA to develop further evidence on the Veteran's behalf.

### 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  
**Ed Lundeen, David Griffith and George Plunkett.**  
These individuals volunteered  
their time to say the  
Pledge of Allegiance  
during the months of July and August.

**THANKS**



### 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 10th and runs  
through Sunday, October 21st.**

*For more information visit their website  
at [scstatefair.org](http://scstatefair.org) or call them at  
803-779-3387.*



## The History of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871

The fire started at about 9:00 p.m. on October 8, 1871, in or around a small barn belonging to the O'Leary family that bordered the alley behind 137 DeKoven Street. The shed next to the barn was the first building to be consumed by the fire, but city officials never determined the exact cause of the blaze. There has, however, been much speculation over the years. The most popular tale blames Mrs. O'Leary's cow, who allegedly knocked over a lantern; others state that a group of men were gambling inside the barn and knocked over a lantern. Still other speculation suggests that the blaze was related to other fires in the Midwest that day. The fire's spread was aided by the city's use of wood as the predominant building material in a style called balloon frame. More



SUPPOSED CAUSE OF THE CHICAGO FIRE. MRS. O'LEARY AND HER COW.

than two thirds of the structures in Chicago at the time of the fire were made entirely of wood, with most of the houses and buildings being topped with highly flammable tar or shingle roofs. All of the city's sidewalks and many roads were also made of wood. Compounding this problem, Chicago received only 1 inch of rain from July 4 to October 9, causing severe drought conditions before the fire, while strong southwest winds helped to carry flying embers toward the heart of the city.

In 1871, the Chicago Fire Department had 185 firefighters with just 17 horse-drawn steam engines to protect the entire city. The initial response by the fire department was quick, but due to an error by the watchman, Matthias Schaffer, the firefighters were sent to the wrong place, allowing the fire to grow unchecked. An alarm sent from the area near the fire also failed to register at the courthouse where the fire watchmen were, while the firefighters were tired from having fought numerous small fires and one large fire in the week before. These factors combined to turn a small barn fire into a conflagration. When firefighters finally arrived at DeKoven Street, the fire had grown and spread to neighboring buildings and was progressing toward the central business district. Firefighters had hoped that the South Branch of the Chicago River and an area that had previously thoroughly burned would act as a natural firebreak. All along the river, however, were lumber yards, warehouses, and coal yards, and barges and numerous bridges across the river. As the fire grew, the southwest wind intensified and became superheated, causing structures to catch fire from the heat and from burning debris blown by the wind. Around 12:00 p.m., flaming debris blew across the river and landed on roofs and the South Side Gas Works.



With the fire across the river and moving rapidly toward the heart of the city, panic set in. About this time, Mayor Roswell B. Mason sent messages to nearby towns asking for help. As more buildings succumbed to the flames, a major contributing factor to the fire's spread was a meteorological phenomenon known as a fire whirl. These fire whirls are likely what drove flaming debris so high and so far. Such debris was blown across the main branch of the Chicago River to a railroad car carrying kerosene. The fire had jumped the river a second time and was now raging across the city's north side. Despite the fire spreading and growing rapidly, the city's firefighters continued to battle the blaze. The fire burned unchecked from building to building, block to block.

Finally, late into the evening of the 9th, it started to rain, but the fire had already started to burn itself out. The fire had spread to the sparsely populated areas of the north side, having consumed the densely populated areas thoroughly. Once the fire had ended, the smoldering remains were still too hot for a survey of the damage to be completed for many days. Eventually, the city determined that the fire destroyed an area about 4 miles long and averaging  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide, encompassing an area of more than 2,000 acres. Destroyed were more than 73 miles of roads, 120 miles of sidewalk, 2,000 lampposts, 17,500 buildings, and \$222 million in property—about a third of the city's valuation. Of the 300,000 inhabitants, 100,000 were left homeless. A total of 120 bodies were recovered, but the death toll may have been as high as 300. The county coroner speculated that an accurate count was impossible, as some victims may have drowned or had been incinerated, leaving no remains.



# VA SOCIAL WORKERS

## How Do I Know I Need A Social Worker?

You will find social workers in all program areas in VA medical centers who are ready to help you with most any need. If you have questions or problems, the social worker will be able to help you or can refer you to the right person. Here are just some of the ways that VA social workers can help:

- Financial or housing assistance
- They can advise you on getting help from the VA or from community agencies, such as Meals on Wheels, so you can continue to live in your own home.
- Do you need help in applying for benefits from the VA, Social Security and other government and community programs? Ask your VA social worker.
- VA social workers develop and implement treatment approaches which address individual social problems and work with acute or chronic medical conditions, dying patients, and bereaved families.
- VA social workers...a voice for at-risk Veterans and their families.
- They can make sure your doctor and other VA staff on your treatment team know your decisions about end-of-life issues, generally called advance directives and living wills. This includes things like whether you want to be on life support equipment, whether you are an organ donor, and which family member or other person you have chosen to make decisions on your behalf when you are unable to make those decisions yourself.
- They can help you arrange for respite care for your caregiver so she or he can have a break or go on vacation without worrying about who will be caring for you.
- Marriage or family problems
- Help with moving to an assisted living facility, a board and care home or a nursing home.
- Someone close to you has passed away and you want to talk about it
- Problems with drinking or drug use
- You feel that someone is taking advantage of you or if you feel mistreated in a relationship
- A parent who feels overwhelmed with child care
- If your parent or spouse is in failing health
- Feeling stressed because of your health or because your medical condition interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling sad, depressed or anxious
- If you really aren't sure what you need, but things just don't feel right

There are many more ways VA social workers can help. If any of these situations apply to you or your family, ask to see the social worker at your VA Medical Center

## How can Social Workers help Veterans with Problems and Concerns?

### Assessment

The first step is generally for the social worker to meet with you, and often with your family. The social worker will ask you questions about your health, your living situation, your family and other support systems, your military experience and the things you think you need help with. The social worker will then write an assessment that will help you and your VA health care team make treatment plans.



Continued on page 15



## Happenings Around Lexington County

### During the Months of September & October

Saturday, September 1st  
through  
Monday, September 3rd

39th Chapin Labor Day Festival & Parade  
For more information visit their website at  
[chapin-sc.com/visitors/festivals&events](http://chapin-sc.com/visitors/festivals&events).



Starts on  
Friday, September 22nd

Deceased Farms in Lexington (corn maze, etc.)  
382 Olde Farm Road, Lexington  
Thursday through Sunday nights  
\*\*Open on Halloween Night\*\*  
For more information visit their website at  
[deceasedfarm.com](http://deceasedfarm.com) or call them @ 803-530-9434.



Friday, September 28th  
through  
Saturday, September 29th

45th Irmo Okra Strut  
For more information visit their website at  
[irmookrastrut.com](http://irmookrastrut.com) or call them @ 803-781-7050.



Friday, October 5th  
through  
Saturday, October 6th

36th Gaston Collard & BBQ Festival  
For more information visit their website at  
[gastonsc.org](http://gastonsc.org) or call them @ 803-796-7725.



Saturday, October 6th  
through  
Sunday, October 7th

Congaree Bluegrass Festival  
Historic Columbia Speedway, Cayce  
For more information visit their website at  
[bluegrassfestivalguide.com/congaree](http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/congaree).



Starts on  
Friday, October 12th

Gilbert House of Terror  
739 Harley Taylor Road  
Friday & Saturday nights with some  
other nights available.  
For more information visit their website at  
[gilberthouseoferror@gmail.com](mailto:gilberthouseoferror@gmail.com)  
or call them @ 803-892-5396.



Wednesday, October 10th  
through  
Sunday, October 21st

SC State Fair  
For more information visit their website at  
[scstatefair.org](http://scstatefair.org) or call them @ 803-779-3387.



Friday, October 19th  
through  
Tuesday, 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](http://riverbanks.org/events/boo-at-the-zoo).



*Thank You  
for your Service to our Country*





# VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP)



The Department of Veterans Affairs provides comprehensive dental care to Veterans who meet eligibility standards; however, the benefit is not available to many Veterans. The VA would like all Veterans and beneficiaries to have access to good oral health. Good oral health is more than just a nice smile or ability to chew favorite foods – it impacts a person’s overall health throughout his or her life.

The VA’s Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) offers enrolled Veterans and beneficiaries of VA’s Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA) the opportunity to purchase dental insurance at a reduced cost.

VADIP was established as a pilot program by the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2012. The pilot program, which began Jan. 1, 2014, and ended Jan. 31, 2017, assessed the feasibility and advisability of providing a premium-based dental insurance plan to eligible individuals. The VA Dental Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2016, signed into law July 29, 2016, allows the VA to continue VADIP until Dec. 31, 2021.



The VA has selected Delta Dental of California and MetLife to once again offer private insurance coverage for VADIP. Enrollment will begin Nov. 15, 2017, for coverage to start Dec. 1, 2017. For more information, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP).

Pilot program contracts with dental insurance providers Delta Dental and MetLife expired Jan. 31, 2017. Individuals enrolled in VADIP when the pilot contracts expired automatically received continued coverage for up to 12 months, not to exceed Jan. 31, 2018, depending on the terms of their Delta Dental or MetLife plan.

For more information, those individuals should contact their insurance provider. The telephone number for Delta Dental is 1-855-370-3303; the telephone number for MetLife is 1-888-310-1681. Once enrollments begin, qualified individuals can enroll at any time - there is no specific enrollment period.

## Eligibility for VADIP

Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program and CHAMPVA beneficiaries are eligible to participate in VADIP. Participation in VADIP does not affect Veterans’ eligibility for VA dental services and treatment.

Dependents of Veterans, except those eligible under CHAMPVA, are not eligible for VADIP; however, the insurance carriers may offer dependents separate coverage options.



## Dental Plan Information

Coverage will be provided throughout the United States and its territories. Multiple plan options allow participants to select a plan that provides benefits and premiums that meet their dental needs and budget. Offered plans vary and may include diagnostic, preventative, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment. Each participant will pay a fixed monthly premium for coverage, in addition to any copayments required by his or her plan. For more information on VADIP, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP).

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**Monday, October 8th is Columbus Day. This is a Federal holiday. The VA regional office as well as Dorn VAMC will be closed.**

**Our office will be open, as we are County offices and do not follow the Federal holiday schedule.**

# Mission Lexington

## 2018 Holiday Basket Wish List

Ham or Turkey (frozen or canned)  
Canned Sweet Potatoes  
Canned Collards  
Stuffing Mix  
Cranberry Sauce  
Cornbread Mix  
Green Beans  
Dessert Mix (Complete kit)



We will begin to give these to clients  
Thanksgiving: Thursday, November 1  
Christmas: Monday, December 3

Questions? Anna Smith  
[anna@missionlexingtonsc.org](mailto:anna@missionlexingtonsc.org)  
803-957-6656 x 228

*You may pack a basket or box and bring it completed,  
or simply bring the items and we will prepare. Feel free  
to add a personal note or prayer for the family.*

*"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" - Matthew 25:40*

216 HARMON STREET, LEXINGTON SC 29072  
803 957 6656 | 803 957 3414 fax | [www.missionlexingtonsc.org](http://www.missionlexingtonsc.org)






**DID YOU KNOW...**



Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at [lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters](http://lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters).

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.



**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.

**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.*

**There will be no outreach in  
 Gaston for October and in Chapin  
 for September and October.**

**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](http://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov)**

**Website**



## WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and others who had helped with their annual Christmas wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America™, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. This nonprofit organization continues the Arlington tradition as part of its mission to Remember, Honor and teach.

In 2017, Wreaths Across America and our national network of volunteers laid over 1,400,000 memorial wreaths at nearly 1200 locations in the United States and beyond. We accomplished this with help from over 2800 fundraising groups, many corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. Our annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery is known as the world's largest veteran's parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veteran's homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.

Proceeds place a wreath at one of the participating cemeteries; help support our fundraising partners, educational and veteran's services outreach. Please note that all sponsorships are sent directly to the location and no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

We welcome all to join us at any Wreaths Across America ceremony. If you would like to participate or help bring sponsored wreaths to your local community, please contact us and we will help connect you with other groups already working in your area.

### Schedule of Events

#### Sunday, December 09, 2018

Start of World's Longest Veterans Parade from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery and participating locations

#### Monday, December 10, 2018 12:00 Noon at the SC Veterans Memorial

Located on the Assembly Street side of the Statehouse grounds

There will be State House wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and Puerto Rico

#### Saturday December 15, 2018 12:00 Noon

Fort Jackson National Cemetery 4107 Percival Rd. Columbia, SC 29229

Parking will be at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking lot across from the cemetery. We will have shuttle buses to bring you to and from the cemetery starting at 10:30am the morning of the ceremony. There will be limited handicap parking in cemetery with proper identification.

For more information visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org), or call Carol Davis (803) 467-4482  
You can also email [waajtjackson@gmail.com](mailto:waajtjackson@gmail.com)



# WREATHS *across* AMERICA

2018

## Wreath Sponsorship Form

\*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state, national veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December.

**FORT JACKSON NATIONAL CEMETERY 3 FOR 2 SPONSORSHIP FORM**

Wreaths may be purchased online at [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.com](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.com) Please use Cemetery Code SCFJNC and Organization Code SC0015

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to:**  
**Wreaths Across America TM**  
 PO Box 3356  
 West Columbia, SC 29171  
 Questions? Please call 803-467-4482  
 Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

Do we have permission to publicize your name as a sponsor?

Yes OR  No, I wish to remain Anonymous

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual- 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card- If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
Family- 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business- 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate- 100 Wreaths	\$1,500.00		
		Grand Total	

**\*\*SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS\*\***

**In Honor of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide email of "In Honor Of" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (if you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing: \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that all sponsorships are sent directly to the location and no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: SCFJNC Fundraising Group ID: SC0015

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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Cash \$: \_\_\_\_\_ Total\$: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # Checks: \_\_\_\_\_ Reconciled: \_\_\_\_\_

MO \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered: \_\_\_\_\_

GEN: \_\_\_\_\_

## VA and U.S. Digital Service Launch New Web Tool to Help Veterans Track their Benefits Appeals

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S Digital Service announced their launch of an improved Appeals Status tool to increase transparency and enable Veterans to track the progress of their benefits claims appeals.

The tool, which went live March 21 on VA's Vets.gov website, will allow Veterans to access detailed information about the status of their benefits appeals and will include alerts about needed actions, as well as estimates of how long each step of the process takes.

Some Veterans who have previewed the new tool said it had given them hope and helped them understand that the process might take longer than expected.

**County Offices will be closed  
on the following dates:  
Monday, September 3rd  
Labor Day**

**CLOSED**

## News Tidbits from the VA & Dorn VAMC

The Veterans Benefits Administration has over 380 thousand employees nationwide.

The William Jennings Bryan Dorn VAMC announced that its nursing home received 3-stars as part of its annual performance rating.



The VA has released a Spanish version of the application for health benefits, as part of the VA's effort to simplify and improve the health care



enrollment process for Veterans. The new language version implements the VA Advisory Committee on

Minority Veterans' recommendation to provide Spanish versions of the application and instructions. The form is available at VA medical facilities and online at [va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-EZ\\_Spanish.pdf](http://va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-EZ_Spanish.pdf).

The VAMC Dorn has a new Women's Veterans Hotline. That number is



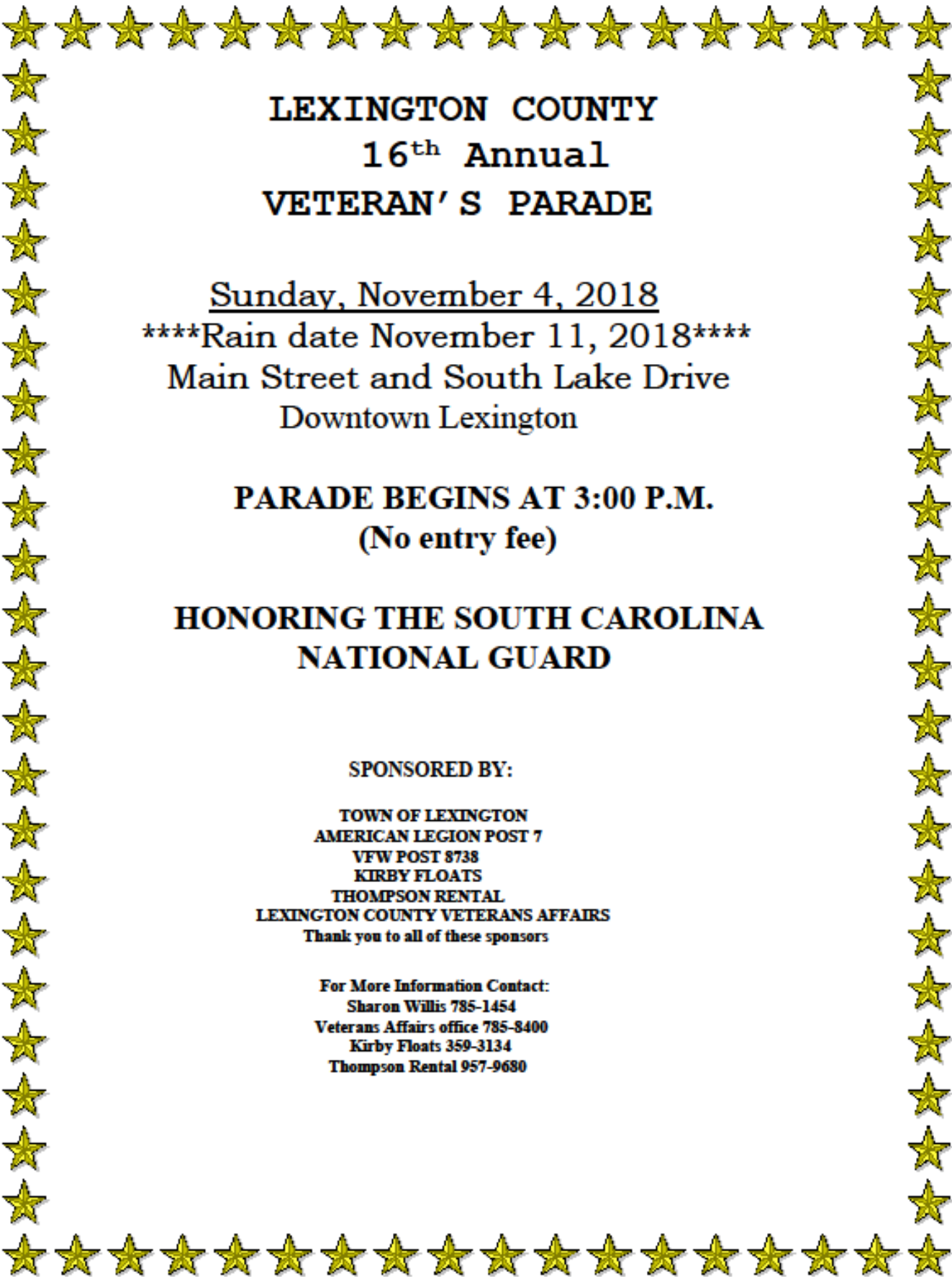
1-855-VAWOMEN (8296636). That number operates Monday - Friday 8am to 10pm and Saturday 8am to 6:30pm EST.

Nationally, there are over 9.1 million Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare. VA healthcare is the largest department within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## Grandparents' Day



**Sunday, September 9th**



**LEXINGTON COUNTY**  
**16<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**VETERAN' S PARADE**

Sunday, November 4, 2018

\*\*\*\*Rain date November 11, 2018\*\*\*\*

Main Street and South Lake Drive  
Downtown Lexington

**PARADE BEGINS AT 3:00 P.M.**  
**(No entry fee)**

**HONORING THE SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**NATIONAL GUARD**

**SPONSORED BY:**

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON**  
**AMERICAN LEGION POST 7**  
**VFW POST 8738**  
**KIRBY FLOATS**  
**THOMPSON RENTAL**  
**LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
Thank you to all of these sponsors

**For More Information Contact:**  
Sharon Willis 785-1454  
Veterans Affairs office 785-8400  
Kirby Floats 359-3134  
Thompson Rental 957-9680

# ***Featured Medal:***

## ***Afghanistan Campaign Medal***

The Afghanistan Campaign Medal is a military award of the United States military, which was created by Executive Order 13363 of President George W. Bush on November 29, 2004. The Afghanistan Campaign Medal was designed by the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry.

The Afghanistan Campaign Medal became available for general distribution in June 2005. It is awarded to any member of the U.S. military who has performed duty within the borders of Afghanistan (or its airspace) for a period of thirty consecutive days or sixty non-consecutive days. The medal is retroactive to October 24, 2001 and is active until a date to be determined. Personnel who have been engaged in combat with an enemy force, or personnel who have been wounded in combat within Afghanistan, may receive the Afghanistan Campaign Medal regardless of the number of days spent within the country. The medal is also awarded posthumously to any service member who dies in the line of duty within Afghanistan, including from non-combat injuries such as accidents and mishaps.

The Afghanistan Campaign Medal may be awarded with the Arrowhead device for qualified soldiers. The Afghanistan Campaign Medal may be awarded with the combat operation insignia for qualified sailors assigned to Marine Corps units. The following are the established combat campaigns authorized for service stars on the Afghanistan Campaign Medal.

- Liberation of Afghanistan – September 11, 2001 to November 30, 2001
- Consolidation I – December 1, 2001 to September 30, 2006
- Consolidation II – October 1, 2006 to November 30, 2009
- Consolidation III - December 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011
- Transition I - July 1, 2011 to a date to be determined

The award replaces the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (GWOTEM) for service in Afghanistan and personnel who previously received the GWOTEM for Afghanistan service may elect to exchange the medal for the new Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Both medals may not be received for the same period of service in Afghanistan and any current Afghanistan service will only be recognized with the Afghanistan Campaign Medal.



Picture of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and Ribbon.



***Coming in the Next Issue...***

Survivor Benefits, ChampVA, and Tricare