

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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VET NEWS

June 2003

RALLY FOR OUR TROOPS/WELCOME HOME

Lexington County service members will be recognized at a Rally on September 7 at Wildcat Hollow in Lexington.

"These young men and women need to know that we appreciate their sacrifices to protect this country from terrorists." Gary R. Baker, Lexington County Veterans Affairs Officer, explained. "They have shown their professionalism in overthrowing a violent dictator with minimal casualties."



The Rally will recognize the troops currently serving around the world and will also be a welcome home event for those who have returned or will be returning by September 7.

"Our service men and women are all volunteers. Each has served in his or her own capacity around the world to protect this country from the threats to freedom and democracy. It is fitting that we should take some time to recognize their efforts."

The planning committee is composed of the Veterans Affairs Office, American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America as well as the American Legion Auxiliary, Granby Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, Blue Star Mothers, Lexington Womans Club, and the Lexington County Employee Committee.

Volunteers are needed to help with the Rally. If you can help, please come to the next meeting on June 19 at 7:00 pm or call the Veterans Affairs Office of your assistance. Information on the Rally can be obtained from the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office, 605 W. Main Street, Lexington or 359-8400

OLDEST VETERANS WANTED

We are searching for the oldest male and female veterans from Lexington County. If you know of a veteran who is more than 90 years old, please contact the Veterans Affairs Office.

We plan to recognize these senior veterans at a later function.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS TO BE HONORED

VFW Post 8738 will be honoring Korean War veterans by presenting each with a Korean War Service Lapel Pin. The date for the presentation ceremony is not determined at this time.

Eligible veterans must have performed their duty within the territorial limits of Korea, in adjacent waters, or in aerial flight over Korea in combat operations.

Call 359-4007 or 865-9600 for information.

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR

Korean War veterans and their family members are urged to attend a full range of activities in the Washington, DC area from July 25-27 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Korean War.

Friday, July 25

5:00 pm- Fairfax High School- Korean American Cultural Foundation Dance

7:00 pm- Sylvan Theater on the Mall- Air Force Band USO Style Performance

Saturday, July 26

10:00 am- Wreath Laying Ceremony, Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknowns

4:30 pm- MCI Center, National Salute to Korean War Veterans- Hosts- Ed McMahon, Wayne Newton, Charlie Pride
Parade of Flags, Unit Colors

Sunday, July 27

10:00 am- Armistice Day Ceremony, Korean War Veterans Memorial- Hosted by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

For updates and information, visit their website at www.korea50.mil or call the committee at 1-866-567-3250

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

June 6	D-Day (1944)
June 6-8	VFW Convention, Sheraton, Columbia
June 14	US Army founded (1775)
June 14	Flag Day
June 15	Fathers Day
June 22	Pledge of Allegiance recognized by Congress (1942)
June 22	GI Bill signed into law (1944)
June 25	Korean War began (1950)
June 27-29	American Legion Convention, Sheraton, Columbia

BENEFITS FOR PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS



Recipients of the Purple Heart are entitled to a range of benefits from the Federal government and South Carolina. Recipients are entitled to:

- Two motor vehicle license plates-free of charge
- Special Purple Heart license plate- requires payment for personalized plate- holders of the special plate are allowed to park in parking lots or parking meters

without charge

- Free tuition for children at state-supported institutions
- Priority group 3 at VA Medical Centers- no out-of-pocket payments (co-payments) for either inpatient or outpatient medical services
- Prescriptions require a \$7 co-payment for 30-day supply of prescription medications for non-service connected conditions

Recipients of the Purple Heart may contact Stan Thornburgh at 803) 787-3582 re. joining the Purple Heart Association.

AGENT ORANGE

Veterans of Vietnam and Korea may be entitled to service-connected benefits if they have certain cancer conditions or diabetes. Vietnam veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning January 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975 and having the designated diseases are included as are veterans who served in Korea from 1968-1969. Any diabetes or cancer condition may entitle such veterans to service-connected disability.

Veterans who need medical treatment that may be related to their exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides should contact the Agent Orange Registry at the VA Medical Center for eligibility information and possible medical treatment.

The national toll-free hotline is 800-749-8387. A great deal of information is available on the website at www.va.gov/agentorange/default.html.

WWII COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM

Murray Price of Lexington will be the keynote speaker at a program to be held at the auditorium at Dorn VA Medical Center on August 15 at 12 noon. Price was a B-24 pilot in the Pacific.

The event is open to the public.

Refreshments are served after the program.



MILITARY HONORS

Any honorably discharged veteran is entitled to receive military honors at burial. Two representatives from the military, one of which must be from the veteran's branch of service, will be in attendance. The two representatives will fold the casket flag and present it to the next of kin. If a bugler is not available, a recorded version of Taps will be played.

Retired veterans or certain other veterans may receive full military honors which includes a firing detail and a flag detail to fold the flag. The firing detail will fire a 21 gun salute (generally 3 salvos of 7 shots each).

The funeral home will arrange for the flag and appropriate honors.

RECORDING OF DD214s

DD214s or discharge papers filed with the Veterans Affairs Office are not a matter of public record and are not accessible to the public. Copies are available only to the veteran, next of kin, and family members.

Veterans are urged to file their copies of DD214s or discharge papers with the Veterans Affairs Office for security and accessibility.



BLUE STAR BANNERS

Blue Star Banner flag was first displayed in the front windows of homes during World War I to signify a son or husband serving in the Armed Forces. The flag quickly became known as the "son in service flag" with each blue star indicating one family member. During World War II, the Department of War issued specifications on the manufacture of the flag as well as guidelines indicating when and by whom the banner could be flown or the lapel pin could be worn.

Each blue star represents one family member serving in the military. The blue star is covered or replaced with a gold star to indicate that the family member was killed or died during the war or period of hostilities. The blue star represents hope and pride, and the gold star represents sacrifice to the cause of liberty and freedom.



The lapel pin is authorized to be worn by family members of the military member which includes: wife, husband, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, parent through adoption, foster parents, children, stepchildren, children through adoption, brothers, sisters, and half brothers and half sisters. At the current time, grandparents are not included on the official list.

The service banner may be displayed in a window of the place of residence of persons who are family members of service members serving during any period of war or hostilities. The banner may be displayed for the duration of the period of war or hostilities.

For more information on the Blue Star Banners, go to www.serviceflags.com or www.bluestarmothers.org/

TRUSCELLO ELECTED DAV SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

At the recent DAV Department Convention, Marian J. Truscello of Batesburg-Leesville was elected Senior Vice Commander of the Department of South Carolina Disabled American Veterans. An Air Force nurse during the Korean War, she is the first woman to hold the office.

PRISONER OF WAR MEDAL

The POW Medal is authorized for any person who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S. Armed Forces, was taken prisoner and held captive after 5 April 1917. The POW Medal is to be issued only to those U.S. military personnel and other personnel granted credible U.S. military service who were taken prisoner and held captive.

- (1) While engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.
- (2) While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force.
- (3) While serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.



The POW Medal may be awarded posthumously. The primary next of kin of eligible prisoners of war who die in captivity may be issued the POW Medal regardless of the length of stay in captivity.

Personnel officially classified as MIA are not eligible for award of the POW Medal. The POW Medal will only be awarded when the individual's prisoner of war status has been officially confirmed and recognized. The return of remains, in and of itself, does not constitute evidence of confirmed prisoner of war status.

All requests for the POW Medal will be initiated by eligible former POWs, or their next of kin, using a personal letter or DD form 2510 (Prisoner of War Medal Application/Information). Applications should be forwarded to the Commander, ARPERCEN, ATTN: DARP-VSE-A, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132-5200.

FUTURE EVENTS

July 4	Independence Day
July 25-27	Korean War 50 th Anniversary Commemorative Events
Aug 15, 12 noon	WWII Commemorative Program- Dorn VA
Nov. 7	Veterans Day Parade- Columbia
Nov. 8 & 9	Celebrate Freedom Festival Air & Ground Show- Camden
Nov. 9	Veterans Celebration in the Park- Lexington
Nov. 11	Veterans Day Celebration- Lexington

TROOP CARE PACKAGES

Troops serving overseas can use/have:

- (1) instant drink/coffee mixes/cool aid in packets (sugar already added)
- (2) playing cards
- (3) travel board games
- (4) paperback books
- (5) pre-packaged crackers and cookies
- (6) individually wrapped hard candy
- (7) baby wipes
- (8) disposable razors
- (9) sunscreen
- (10) chapstick
- (11) toothbrushes
- (12) toothpaste

Items should be placed in one-gallon size Ziploc storage bags. All items will be checked before distribution. Send nothing that will melt.

We expect to collect goodies to send to the troops at the Rally on September 7. More on that in future issues.

Contact the Veterans Affairs Office for information as to where to send the care packages.



AROUND THE OFFICE

We're working on a project to videotape veterans and their war experiences. We need a coordinator who will contact the veterans and schools and we also need someone who will do the videotaping. If you have any member who would be willing to be videotaped, speak to school or church groups, or assist with this project, let us know.

Please drop by any care packages or other material to be sent in care packages for our troops overseas. We'll see that it gets there.

We're always ready to work with veterans and their families, however, to do that, we need to be informed of what's happening. Let us know if there's a veteran or family member who needs help, is hospitalized, died, or otherwise needs assistance.

Lexington County Council has approved a part-time clerk for the VA office starting July 1. The clerk will fill a gap in the office staff by providing some much-needed support.

Gary Baker has been certified for claims processing by the American Legion and the Governor's Office, Division of Veterans Affairs.

Come visit the Veterans Affairs Office. We're in the former Kroger's grocery store building, now the Auxiliary Administration building. It's here to serve you, the veteran! We've added some color, posters, and photos, etc. to make it comfortable for veterans. We look forward to seeing you.

Lexington County Veterans Affairs
605 West Main Street
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