



GARY R. BAKER
DIRECTOR
JEAN FRICK
ASST. CSO

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**

TELEPHONE: (803) 359-8400
FAX: (803) 808-2105

605 WEST MAIN STREET
SUITE 101
LEXINGTON, S.C. 29072

VET NEWS

APRIL 2004

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY

Agent Orange was a herbicide sprayed in Vietnam, Korea and elsewhere to defoliate vegetation to remove cover for enemy troops. Over the years, a number of diseases have been identified with connection to the spraying of Agent Orange. These include Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, soft-tissue sarcoma, chloracne, Hodgkins disease, porphyria cutanea tarda, respiratory cancers, multiple myeloma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, prostate cancer, diabetes mellitus, and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. Other diseases are under review by the Secretary of the Veterans Administration.

The VA established the Agent Orange Registry to provide examinations for veterans who may have come into contact with Agent Orange. Veterans who served in Vietnam after January 9, 1962 or who served in Korea beginning in late 1967 and who have any of the diseases listed above should contact the Agent Orange Helpline at 1-800-749-8387, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Central Standard Time. A 24-hour automated system is available at that time before and after normal business hours.

Dorn VA Medical Center has an Agent Orange Screening Program. There currently is about a 2 month waiting period for appointments. Veterans seeking a screening should take or fax their discharge and name and address to the Agent Orange Screening Office, fax number (803) 695-6709.

WWII MONUMENT DEDICATION

The WWII Monument Dedication is slated for May 29 in Washington, DC. Tours are still available. Contact Carolina Tours at (803) 356-3000.

The events should receive a lot of publicity. Keep an eye out for articles in various media outlets.

Attached is a listing of events for the May 27-30 weekend. If you are able to take one of the tours or visit on your own, this should be a very memorable event.

EVENTS OF NOTE

American Legion Post 6 is hosting a Welcome Home party for returned troops on Friday, April 2 at 8:00 pm. (803) 799-2736.

The Wall That Heals, a traveling half-scale replica of the Washington Vietnam Memorial, will be in Charleston at Brittlebank Park from April 14-18. (843) 762-7546.

Retiree Appreciation Day will be held at Fort Jackson on Saturday, April 24 starting at 9:00 am.

A massing of the colors will be held at the Scottish Rite Temple, 7230 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia on Sunday, April 25 at 3:00 pm. Call (803) 776-6600 for further information.

VFW Post 8738 will conduct a Loyalty Day program on Sunday, May 2 at 1:00 pm. A meal will be served after the program. (803) 359-4007. Speaker will be LTC Mike Hudson, Commander, 157th Fighter Squadron.

Vietnam Veterans Program will be held at Dorn VA Medical Center auditorium on Friday, May 7 at 12 noon.

American Legion Post 130 will be conducting a ceremony and brunch on Saturday, May 29 for those veterans who are not able to attend the functions in Washington. Post 130 plans to recognize every World War II veteran who attends. The program begins at 10 am at the Brookland Cayce High School Monument with a brunch at Post 130 beginning at 11:30 am. Bring your own chair and join in the celebration. (803) 926-9133.

American Legion Post 193 in Chapin will conduct a Memorial Day breakfast and ceremony on May 31. (803) 932-9596.

American Legion Post #6's Health Fair has been tentatively rescheduled for Saturday, June 5. The Health Fair will offer opportunities to visit health care providers, vendors, and to participate in some socializing. Stay tuned for the May newsletter for further details. (803) 799-2736.

D DAY CELEBRATION

2004 marks the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy. Remember the veterans of D-Day in any official functions planned for Memorial Day or early June.

DECALS



The VA office still has the "Proud to be a Lexington County Veteran" decals. Please let the office know if you need a supply to pass out to veterans at different functions.

SERVICE CONNECTED?

What does it mean? Any medical condition or injury that was incurred in, or aggravated by the veteran's military service. Service connection for a disability or death is established through many ways. The four most common are:

1. Disability or death was incurred in military service.
2. Aggravation of a before service disability during service.
3. Presumption that the disease or disability was incurred in military service.
4. Because of a service-connected disability, a secondary condition has occurred.

Service connection of a disease or disability is necessary before disability compensation can be paid.

No compensation is paid if the disability is a result of a veteran's own willful misconduct or abuse of alcohol or drugs.

REUNIONS

We have been advised of the following upcoming reunions:

Escort Carriers Sailors and Airmen Association, Braintree, MA, September 19-22. John Smith, 7268 N.W. 16th Street, Ankeny, IA 50021-8823, (515) 289-1467, email jwspauli@aol.com.

USS Saginaw Bay VCE-82 and VC78, VC88, South Portland, Maine, September 9-13. Rita Homman, 4220 Old Mill Road, Lancaster, OH (740) 654-1651. Email ejhomman@juno.com.

USS Salamaua (CVE 96) & Squadrons VC 70 & VC87. Salt Lake City, Utah, September 1-4. Calvin Brown, 745 Emery Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84104 (801) 359-3214.

Let us know of any other planned reunions.

HOW TO LOCATE OTHER VETS

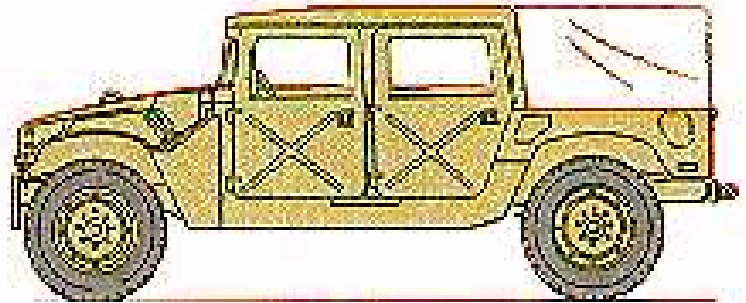
Unit rosters are one way to maintain contact with fellow soldiers or shipmates. Also, a unit roster may assist you in obtaining verification of incidents for a VA claim. Please see the attached sheet for obtaining unit rosters of Army, Marine and Navy rosters.

122nd ENGINEERING BATTALION

Company B, 122nd Engineer Battalion from Batesburg-Leesville returned from service in Iraq on March 11 amidst a throng of family and well-wishers. A welcoming ceremony for the Battalion was held at Strom Thurmond High School, followed by another ceremony for Company B at their armory in Batesburg-Leesville.

STATE BENEFITS

We're often asked what benefits the State offers to veterans. Please see the attached flyer for information on the State benefits.



REPLACEMENT OF AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

A World War II veteran called then came into the office a couple of months ago. He was carrying a grocery bag, which contained a number of awards he was awarded for his service. Among those medals were the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, and several service medals and service stars. He was one happy camper.

If you have misplaced, lost, or were never presented awards to which you are entitled, a DD Form 180 may be completed requesting those awards. The appropriate branch will replace those awards one time for you without charge.

The process takes approximately 6 months from the time of the request until the medals are received.

Contact the VA office for the form or for any assistance in obtaining these awards.

SIGN UP FOR MEDICAL CARE

Applications for medical care are being accepted at Dorn VA Medical Center on VA Form 10-10EZ. Veterans are enrolled into 8 categories. Due to the influx of veterans seeking medical care through the VA, the Category 8 veterans are those who do not have any service-connected disability or a 0% disability and whose income and net worth is above a local threshold and index.

Veterans should complete the application to get enrolled even though medical care may not be readily available. The form is available on-line or from the VA office.

ROAD TO VICTORY

Celebrate Freedom Foundation sponsors the Road to Victory, a live presentation of the sights, sounds, and music of World War II. This year's presentation will be on Friday, April 30 at 7:30 pm at the Koger Center. Tickets are \$18.00; military and senior citizens at \$15.00; and students at \$12.00 from Capitol Tickets at (803) 251-2222.

SURVIVOR BENEFITS

President Bush signed into law the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2003. A number of changes have been made, one of which affects the surviving spouses of veterans. Under the old law, a surviving spouse who received Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) lost the benefit upon remarriage. The new law permits a surviving spouse who remarries on or after his/her 57th birthday to remain eligible for DIC, home loan and educational benefits. The effective date of the change is January 1, 2004.

Surviving spouses who remarried after reaching age 57 and who file claims for the restoration of their benefits during calendar year 2004 are entitled to benefits from January 1, 2004. However, surviving spouses who remarried after turning 57 prior to the enactment of this legislation have one year (until December 16, 2004) to apply for restoration of benefits.

Eligible surviving spouses whose claims for restoration of benefits are not received prior to December 16, 2004 are not entitled to restoration of benefits.

This also eliminates, for spouses of deceased military retirees who currently receive SBP, the SBP/DIC offset for those benefiting from these changes.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Rapha Residential Home, 3959 Fish Hatchery Road, Gaston is looking for veterans to visit the more than 20 veterans who reside there.

Contact Debbie Williams at (803) 755-6541 (work) or (803) 955-0453 (home) if you can volunteer some time or resources towards these veterans.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 1st Okinawa invasion began (1945)
- 9th Fall of Bataan (1942)
- 11th Persian Gulf War official cease fire (1991)
- 18th Doolittle Raid on Japan (1942)

CVAO MEETING

The claims staff of the Lexington County VA office will be attending the spring training conference of the County Veterans Affairs Officers in Camden on April 14-16. A staff member will be in the office during this time period to handle any inquiries.

HOMELESS VETERANS

A number of veterans, either voluntarily or involuntarily, are homeless. Circumstances have put them in a position where they require assistance. The VA has programs to assist them in finding lodging, food, counseling, and job placement.

Lexington County has a number of homeless veterans or near-homeless veterans needing assistance in the form of financial assistance, food, lodging, or transportation. We have been fortunate to have some storage warehouses to donate clothing and furniture from closed units.

If you are able to provide assistance through donation of time or resources, please contact the VA office.



Volunteers packing and wrapping over 1,000 pounds of Girl Scout cookies for shipment to our troops overseas.

U.S. MILITARY WARNINGS

"Aim towards the Enemy." -Instruction printed on U.S. Army Rocket Launcher

"When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend." - U.S.M.C. Training Bulletin

"Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed to always hit the ground." -U.S.A.F. Literature.

"If the enemy is in range, so are you." - Infantryman's Journal

"A slipping trigger gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what's left of your unit." Army's Magazine of Preventive Maintenance.

"It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed." -U.S. Air Force Manual

"Try to look unimportant; they may be low on ammo." -Infantryman's Journal

"Tracers work both ways." -U.S. Army Ordnance Manual

"Five-second fuses only last three seconds." - Infantryman's Journal

"Bravery is being the only one who knows you're afraid." -David Hackworth

"If your attack is going too well, you're walking into an ambush." -Infantryman's Journal

"No combat-ready unit has ever passed inspection."

"Any ship can be a minesweeper... once." -Anon Naval brass

"Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do." -Unknown Marine Recruit

"Don't draw fire; it irritates the people around you." Your Buddies

"I think they are ours!" World War II Air Corps Manual of Aircraft Identification, citing "Famous Last Words."



Some of the local aviators highlighted in Rebecca Pepin's book, Honoring South Carolina's World War II Heroes of Flight, as they gathered at the Flight Deck restaurant on Saturday, March 27.

COMMITTEE LOOKING FOR VETERANS OF SAIPAN AND TINIAN

The Committee for the commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of World War II is looking for veterans of the World War II battles of Saipan and Tinian. Veterans of the two battles will be invited to attend the commemoration ceremonies to be held June 12-16, 2004 on the island of Saipan.

Contact Jessica Jordan at (670) 234-7212, or at PMB 409 Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950, email at: marianas04-anniversary@yahoo.com

For further information on the anniversary activities, visit the website at www.WorldWarII.info.

NATIONAL CEMETERY IN MIDLANDS AREA SOUGHT

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is attempting to identify a site in the Columbia/Greenville area for a new National Cemetery authorized by Public Law 108-109, signed by President Bush on Veterans Day 2003. The National Cemetery Administration will identify suitable land with a minimum of 200-250 acres for current and future internment needs.

BLUE STAR MOTHERS NEED DONATIONS/FINANCIAL HELP

The Blue Star Mothers need assistance shipping materials to troops overseas. They are requesting phone cards and/or current DVDs.

Contact Janet Parsons at 808-6881 or 808-6485 or Ann Ricard at 206-6088.