



JULY 2005

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



At the time of the signing the US consisted of 13 colonies under the rule of England's King George III. Leading up to the signing, there had been growing unrest in the colonies surrounding the taxes that colonists were required to pay to England. The major objection was "Taxation without Representation" -- the colonists had no say in the decisions of English Parliament. Rather than negotiating, King George sent extra troops to the colonies to help control any rebellion that might be arising.

1774 - The 13 colonies send delegates to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to form the First Continental Congress. While unrest was brewing, the colonies were far from ready to declare war.

April 1775 - King George's troops advance on Concord, Massachusetts, prompting Paul Revere's midnight ride that sounded the alarm "The British are coming, the British are coming." The subsequent battle of Concord, famous for being the "shot heard round the world," would mark the unofficial beginning of the American Revolution.

May 1776 - After nearly a year of trying to work out their differences with England, the colonies again send delegates to the Second Continental Congress.

June 1776 - Admitting that their efforts were hopeless, a committee was formed to compose the formal Declaration of Independence. Headed by Thomas Jefferson, the committee also included John Adams,

Benjamin Franklin, Philip Livingston and Roger Sherman.

June 28, 1776 - Jefferson presents the first draft of the declaration to Congress.

July 4, 1776 - After various changes to Jefferson's original draft, a vote was taken late in the afternoon of July 4th. Of the 13 colonies, 9 voted in favor of the Declaration; 2, Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted no; Delaware was undecided and New York abstained.

John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence. It is said that he signed his name "' with a great flourish' so George can read that without spectacles!"

July 6, 1776 - The Pennsylvania Evening Post is the first newspaper to print the Declaration of Independence.

July 8, 1776 - The first public reading of the declaration takes place in Philadelphia's Independence Square. The bell in Independence Hall, then known as the "Province Bell" would later be renamed the "Liberty Bell" after its inscription - "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All The Inhabitants Thereof."

August 1776 - The task begun on July 4, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was not actually completed until August. Nonetheless, the 4th of July has been accepted as the official anniversary of United States independence from Britain.

July 4, 1777 - The first Independence Day celebration takes place. It's interesting to speculate what those first 4th festivities were like. By the early 1800s the traditions of parades, picnics, and fireworks were firmly established.

NEW OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Lexington Main Office: 785-8400
From Batesburg-Leesville: 332-8400
From Chapin: 941-0231
These are toll-free calls

**LEXINGTON VETERANS AFFAIRS
PERSONNEL TAKE SOFTWARE “Training,
Responsibility, Involvement, & Preparation
(TRIP)” TRAINING**

Gary R. Baker, Veterans Affairs Officer, Jean Frick, Assistant County Service Officer, and Barbara O’Connor, Veterans Affairs Specialist, recently were certified by the VA for completion of the TRIP Training Program. This allows the three staff members of the Lexington Veterans Affairs Office to access the status of a veteran’s claim on-line.

**THE VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
ON MONDAY
JULY 4TH, 2005.**

**ARMY ANNOUNCES NEW
COMBAT ACTION BADGE DESIGN**

The Army has announced the design for the Combat Action Badge. The design was approved by Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff.

The CAB, featuring both a bayonet and grenade, may be awarded to any Soldier performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement, according to its authorizing language. Award is not limited by one’s branch or military occupational specialty.

“Warfare is still a human endeavor,” Schoomaker said. “Our intent is to recognize Soldiers who demonstrate and live the Warrior Ethos.”

"The Global War on Terrorism and its associated operations will be the first era of conflict considered for this award," said Lt. Col. Bill Johnson, Human Resources Command chief of military awards. "September 18, 2001, is the effective date for the new award. That is when President Bush signed Senate Joint Resolution 23, authorizing the use of military force against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States."

The CAB will go into immediate production and should be available late this summer or early fall through unit supply and military clothing sales stores.



JULY OUTREACH PROGRAM

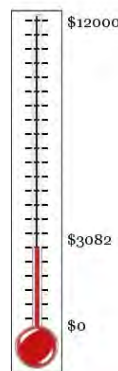
July 5th: 8-12 Batesburg-Leesville
July 12th: 9-12 Chapin
July 19th: 8-12 Swansea

**LEXINGTON COUNTY
VETERANS’ VAN**

Donations to the Veterans’ Van Fund are growing but we need everyone’s help to make this goal a reality. The van will be purchased through a program of the DAV at a cost of \$10,000-12,000 each. The vans are titled to the VA Medical Center which then accepts responsibility for maintenance, fuel, and insurance.

The Advisory Committee is asking each veterans’ organization to contribute \$500 or more to the program between now and July 1. Personal donations also can be made.

Donations can be made to the Lexington County Veterans Van Fund, 605 West Main Street, Lexington, SC 29072.



The thermometer graph shows the current status of funds collected, \$3,082.



Combat-Related Special Compensation

There are more than 3 million disabled American veterans living today who are united by an experience they never anticipated. They are the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces who became disabled while protecting the principles of freedom and democracy upon which our nation was built.

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will be erected in a place of honor in clear view of the U.S. Capitol. It will provide a long-overdue tribute to those who have placed their lives in harm's way, and who spend each day living with a deep and permanent reminder.

(CRSC) The 2003 National Defense Authorization Act authorized new payments to be made to all military retirees whose disability resulted from a combat injury or wound for which they were awarded a Purple Heart. In addition, the NDAA authorized military retirees whose 10 percent or greater disability resulted from combat-related activities (as determined by criteria set by the Secretary of Defense). Such activities would include, for example, injuries received in live-fire training exercises. The monthly payment DOD would be authorized to make could range from \$103 to \$2,160. In addition, the conferees continued payment of a special stipend ranging from \$50 to \$300 per month to approximately 33,000 severely disabled military retirees with a VA rating of 10 percent or higher (SCSD). Although these provisions do not benefit the entire disabled retiree community, the Conferees believe that this is another significant step towards amending the concurrent receipt law. The new program will pay all Purple Heart recipients the amount of VA disability related to the award of the medal, and four categories of pay will also be added for disabilities 10% and greater as covered in DOD Instruction 1332.38 (DODI).

Combat-related (as defined by the DODI)

This standard covers those injuries and diseases attributable to the special dangers associated with armed conflict or the preparation or training for armed conflict. A physical disability shall be considered combat-related if it makes the member unfit or contributes to unfitness and was incurred under any of the circumstances listed in paragraphs 1 through 4 below.

1. As a direct result of armed conflict. The criteria are the same as in paragraph above.
2. While engaged in hazardous service. Such service includes, but is not limited to, aerial flight duty, parachute duty, demolition duty, experimental stress duty, and diving duty.
3. Under conditions simulating war. In general, this covers disabilities resulting from military training, such as war games, practice alerts, tactical exercises, airborne operations, leadership reaction courses; grenade and live-fire weapons practice; bayonet training; hand-to-hand combat training; repelling, and



SCHOLARSHIP FUND

There is a Scholarship fund established for LCpl Torrence who died in Iraq. Memorial contributions can be made to Lance Cpl. Joshua Torrence Scholarship Fund, First Community Bank, in care of David Proctor, P.O. Box 64, Lexington, SC 29071.

DFAS OFFERS TOLL-FREE NUMBER FOR CRSC QUESTIONS

negotiation of combat confidence and obstacle courses. It does not include physical training activities, such as calisthenics and jogging or formation running and supervised sports.

4. Caused by an instrumentality of war. Incurrence during a period of war is not required. A favorable determination is made if the disability was incurred during any period of service as a result of such diverse causes as wounds caused by a military weapon, accidents involving a military combat vehicle, injury, or sickness caused by fumes, gases, or explosion of military ordnance, vehicles, or material. However, there must be a direct causal relationship between the instrumentality of war and the disability. For example, an injury resulting from a Service member falling on the deck of a ship while participating in a sports activity would not normally be considered an injury caused by an instrumentality of war (the ship) since the sports activity and not the ship caused the fall.

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) officials have announced that DFAS has completed processing the backlog of more than 9,000 Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) retroactive payments that have been approved for more than 60 days. The backlog was created in June 2003 and January 2004 when legislation was passed that changed entitlements and required additional policy and coordination between the military services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and DFAS.

CRSC applications will normally be paid within 60 days of military service approval. Military retirees whose applications have been approved, but who have not been paid for more than 60 days since the approval, may call (800) 472-7098 between 8 – 4:30 EST. Officials emphasize that only those retired members whose eligibility have been verified and whose payments are overdue should use this number.

DEATH BENEFITS INCREASES

The House Appropriations Committee has approved the President's Supplemental Budget

request, and also has included provisions for increased service death benefits. The bill provides for Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage to increase to \$400,000 and the death gratuity to \$100,000 for the survivors of all members killed on active duty on or after the date the law change is enacted. Maximum payments for these benefits under current law are \$250,000 and \$12,000, respectively. The committee also accepted an amendment that would:

- Pay a 'special death gratuity' of \$150,000 to the survivors of certain servicemembers who died on active duty "in performance of military duty" since October 7, 2001; and

- Pay an additional \$88,000 death gratuity to survivors of members who died on active duty since October 7, 2001 if the death was a "direct result of an injury or illness incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense."

The intent of the \$150,000 payment is to make the GLI increase retroactive for this group. Since SGLI coverage can't be purchased for someone who is already deceased, the Pentagon would pay the amount as a special death gratuity. Committee sources indicated that not everyone who died on active duty would be eligible under this language, but only those whose deaths occurred while they were performing their military duties.

Similarly, the extra \$88,000 death gratuity would make up the difference between the \$12,000 already paid and the new \$100,000 limit. The Administration originally proposed paying this amount (and the added \$150,000 special death gratuity) only to members killed in the combat zone. This language would allow the Secretary of Defense a little broader discretion to cover deaths "resulting from" OEF/OIF.

The Senate will take up the President's supplemental appropriations request after the House completes action on it. SGLI coverage for members deployed in a combat zone.

CHAIRMAN BUYER OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INTRODUCES

VETERANS' COLA BILL

Chairman Steve Buyer of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs recently introduced the *Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2005* to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to veterans' benefits effective December 1, 2005. Additionally the bill codifies the current disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) rates.

It further increases the amount for additional compensation for dependants, the clothing allowance paid to veterans whose service-connected disability causes irreparable damage to their clothing and DIC for surviving spouses with minor children. Dependant children receiving DIC also will benefit from this increase.

PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS



"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen."

DISPLAYING THE U.S. FLAG

The Federal Flag Code contains rules for handling



and displaying the U.S. flag. While the federal code contains no penalties for misusing the flag, states have their own flag codes and may impose penalties. In 1989, Congress enacted the **Flag Protection Act**, which states that anyone who knowingly desecrates the flag may be fined and/or imprisoned for up to one year.

Traditional guidelines call for displaying the flag in public only from sunrise to sunset. However, the flag may be displayed at all times if it is illuminated during darkness. The flag should not be displayed during inclement weather unless it is an all-weather flag. It should especially be displayed on national and state holidays, and special occasions.

The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously. When carried in procession with other flags, the U.S. flag should be either on the marching right (the flag's right) or to the front and center of the flag line. When displayed on a float in a parade, the flag should be hung from a staff or suspended so it falls free. It should not be draped over a vehicle.

When displayed flat against the wall on a speaker's platform, the flag should be above and behind the speaker with the union on the left side as the audience looks at it (again, the flag's right). When the flag hangs from a staff in a church or public place, it should appear to the audience on the left, the speaker's right. Any other flags displayed should be placed on the opposite side of the speaker.

During the hoisting or lowering of the flag or when it passes in parade or review, Americans should stand at attention facing the flag and place their right hand over the heart. Uniformed military members render the military salute. Men not in uniform should remove any headdress and hold it with their right hand at their left shoulder, the hand resting over the heart. Those who are not U.S. citizens should stand at attention.

When the flag is worn out or otherwise no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

EDITOR WINS AWARDS

MAY 21, 2005



The Eagle Boy Scout Award was presented to Logan Sharpe by VFW Post 8738 Senior Vice Commander Hugh Gunter, on May 21, 2005 at the Commander's Award Ceremony. Logan is an Eagle Boy Scout with Troop 26, Pisgah Lutheran Church, Lexington S. C. He is now entered in the National competition as the State Department winner competing against the other states.

At the recent VFW state convention, Betty J. Carson, Veterans Affairs Clerk and editor, was awarded 3rd place, in Legislative and also was presented with a certificate "for Meritorious and Distinguished Service". VFW Post 8738 was awarded a plaque for First Place Winner in the District/Post website competition. The website was designed by and is maintained by Betty, webmistress, who is also Senior Vice President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Go to: <http://www.vfw8738.org/>



Eagle Scout Significance

LEXINGTON VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWS UPDATE

Jean Frick, Assistant County Service Officer, is out of the office on extended sick leave. Keep her in your prayers and thoughts.

This leaves the office short one employee during this time. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment so we can better serve you. If you just walk in, you may have to wait for an extended period of time or you may be asked to come back later.

There have been some renovations in our office which will result in more privacy for veterans and their families and offer added security.

The fact that a boy is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education, business or industry, and community service. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years.



Not every boy who joins a Boy Scout troop earns the Eagle Scout rank; only about 4 percent of all Boy Scouts do so. This represents more than 1 million Boy Scouts who have earned the rank since 1911. Nevertheless, the goals of Scouting—citizenship training, character development, and personal fitness—remain important for all Scouts, whether or not they attain the Eagle Scout rank.

**VFW POST 8738
BOY SCOUT AWARD**

**Veterans Affairs Office
(803) 785-8400 Main office**

(803) 785-0115 FAX

AMERICAN LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Fundraising kits and event planning guides for the Legion's American Legacy Scholarship program, which provides college money for the children of U.S. troops killed on duty since September 11, 2001, are available now. The kits contain Legacy Cards, which can be "sold" for \$1 each by local merchants, heading into Armed Services Day, and as part of the Legion's 2005 Blue Star Salute. To order kits, call:

(317) 630-1212 or e-mail:

acy@legion.org

JUST ONE! SOLDIERS FOR SOLDIERS RECYCLING PROGRAM

Welcome to Soldiers For Soldiers!

With over 300 million empty inkjet and laser printer cartridges along with 150 million used cell phones being discarded into our nation's landfills each year, polluting our rivers and streams, something had to be done.

Well one person has — 20-year-old A1C Fallon O'Brien of the United States Air Force. Airman O'Brien along with The American Legion have started the Soldiers For Soldiers collection campaign to raise funds for The American Legion (www.legion.org) and their most worthwhile active duty and veteran related charitable programs. We are calling on everyone to send us "Just One" inkjet cartridge or cellphone. It's free and easy.

Unlike other charitable programs, we are a pure grass-roots fundraising organization made up strictly of 100% volunteers, so 100% of the proceeds go directly to helping our soldiers and their families. Feel free to drop off your donation at any of the 15,000 local American Legion Posts or mail them directly to us using our easy-to-use shipping instructions.

Please help us do a lot of good for our wonderful soldiers and their families; after all we are asking for "your Trash not your Cash."

INFORMATIVE WEBSITE

This website contains a lot of military information of interest to veterans and their dependents.

<http://usmilitary.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=usmilitary&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.army.mil%2Fsymbols%2Fcombatbadges>

VA LAYS BLAME IN DISABILITY DISPARITIES

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Staffing shortages and an outdated system for assessing claims are among the reasons for wide differences in disability payments for veterans, the government said Thursday.

Claims examiners use 60-year-old guidelines to assess ailments; the guidelines don't include nonphysical conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder that are now recognized, according to a report from the Veterans Affairs Department.

The investigators also found that 25 percent of the VA-approved cases of post-traumatic stress disorder they reviewed lacked proof of the required event or series of events that led to the ailment.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson said the report had turned up "some information that demands the attention of this agency."

"The amount of dollars involved is huge and the lives involved are important," Nicholson said. "Our number one goal is to take care of those veterans who are deserving."

CEREMONIAL BUGLE

The Lexington Veterans of Affairs Office has purchased an electronic ceremonial bugle to be used

at deceased veterans' funerals or ceremonial occasions. The manual explains how Funeral Honors should be performed as well as operation and maintenance instructions. This bugle may be reserved by authorized personnel through this office at: 803-785-8400.



Bugler Available

Candace L. Russell is available as a bugler/trumpeter for ceremonies, memorials and funerals. She served in the U.S. Army for six years including deployments to Bosnia and Kosovo. She would like to serve her fellow veterans with the playing of "Taps" in their honor. She can be reached at: (803) 358-0697 or clRussell@sc.rr.com.

WOMEN AND THE PURPLE HEART

During World War II, Lieutenant Francis Ahrendson, Army Nurse Corps, stepped on a German anti-personnel mine and shrapnel riddled her body. In October 2000, Petty Officer Third Class Elizabeth Sanchez LaFontaine, US Navy, broke both legs when terrorists attacked the USS Cole as the ship refueled in a port in Yemen.



In June 2003, an enemy bullet wounded Private Candace May, US Army, as she patrolled in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Each received the Purple Heart, the medal awarded for injury suffered as a result of enemy action, injury as a result of treatment while a prisoner of war.

Dr. Judith Bellafaire, Chief Historian in the Office of History and Collections at the Women's Memorial, has located more than 200 servicewomen who have received the Purple Heart since World War II and she believes many more exist. "There is

no centralized listing," she explains. As a result, Dr. Bellafaire identifies Purple Heart recipients through personal contacts and referrals, through research in books and periodicals, and through records from specific incidents. Her current research includes investigating the bombing of Khobar Towers military complex in Saudi Arabia in June 1996. The attack killed 19 Americans and wounded hundreds more. "Military women were likely among the wounded," she believes.

Your help is welcome! Please [contact Dr. Bellafaire](#) with any information concerning servicewomen who have received the Purple Heart.

WELCOME HOME FROM IRAQ NATIONAL GUARD 111TH BATTALION

A "Homecoming for Our Heroes" was held at VFW Post 8738, Sunday, June 5, 2005.



A few of the troops of the 111th BN

From left to right: James Hewitt, WWII vet; 1SG James D. Owens; Sammy Bixley, WWII vet; and Charles Hilton, WWII vet.

