

**Veterans Affairs Office
of Lexington County**



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Editor: Cindy Wise

VET NEWS

July 2010

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JULY DATES FOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

July 6th: 9-12 Batesburg-Leesville

July 13th: 9-12 Chapin

Please call the office to schedule an
appointment.

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Lexington Main Office: 785-8400

From Batesburg/Leesville: 332-8400

From Chapin: 941-0231

DATES TO REMEMBER:

July 4th	Fourth of July Peach Festival in Gilbert
July 5th	County Offices Closed No Van
July 12th	Veterans Advisory Committee
July 27th	Korean War Ended (1953) National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
July 28th	World War I Began (1914)

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY !!!



PLEASE NOTE:
ALL COUNTY OFFICES WILL BE
C L O S E D
ON **JULY 4TH** IN OBSERVANCE
OF INDEPENDENCE
DAY.



VA regulations for implementation of presumptive conditions due to exposure to Agent Orange for Ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's Disease, and B cell leukemia have been placed on hold pending a US Senate hearing in September.

NASCAR TICKETS WINNER

The Lexington County VA Office received the Gold Award which was presented to organizations achieving \$150 or more employee per capita for the 2009-2010 United Way of the Midlands Community Campaign. Our office won two tickets to the NASCAR race held May 31, 2010. To honor our volunteer van drivers, we held a drawing and are pleased to announce that Ted Powell was the winner of the drawing. He has been a volunteer at DORN VA Hospital and a volunteer Disabled American Veteran van driver for our office since May 2008.



Congratulations!

WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Family members, friends, and concerned citizens can support our troops who are deployed.

They may:

- Provide a Blue Star Banner to family members of service members. They can be purchased at <http://emblem.legion.org>
 - Donate a calling card to help keep service members in touch with their families at Operation Uplink at <http://operationuplink.org>
 - Send a greeting via email through Operation Dear Abby at <http://www.OperationDearAbby.net>
 - Sign a virtual 'thank-you' card at the Defend America web site at <http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html>
 - Make a donation to one of the military relief societies: Army Emergency Relief at <http://www.aerhq.org/> Navy/Marine Relief Society at <http://nmcrs.org/> Air Force Aid Society at <http://www.afas.org/> Coast Guard Mutual Assistance at <http://www.cgmahq.org/>
 - Donate to Operation USO Care Package at <http://www.uso-metrodc.org/care1.html>
 - Support the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services at <http://www.redcross.org/services/afes/>
- Volunteer at a VA Hospital <http://www.va.gov/vetsday/> to honor veterans from past conflicts
- Support families whose loved ones are being treated at military and VA hospitals through a donation to the Fisher House at <http://www.fisherhouse.org>
 - Reach out to military families in your community, especially those with a loved one overseas
 - Send a personal message via *Stars and Stripes* at messages@estripes.com (messages are limited to 50 words and printed on a first-come, first-served basis.)
 - Participate in the Gift of Groceries program at <http://www.commissaries.com/certifcheck/index.htm>

Lexington Leader: Gary Baker

Gary Baker has spent his life serving his country, his state, his county, and his neighbors. He never ran for office, but has held positions of authority in the Army, South Carolina state government, and currently serves as the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Officer. "My current job is the best thing I have ever done," says this veteran of military and community service. "The Lexington County Veterans Affairs office is funded by the County Council, and I am appointed by the legislative delegation. We are here for the sole benefit of Lexington military veterans and their families.

"We assist them with a variety of claims, including medical, pension, and death benefits. We can refer them to the proper agencies for help with their needs."

The office works closely with the VA Hospital in Columbia. Three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, volunteer drivers transport veterans there for appointments and assistance. "We couldn't do as much without our volunteers," says Baker. "We can always use more volunteer help."

In addition, the office operates an outreach program, on duty one morning each month in Batesburg-Leesville, and one in Chapin. Gary Baker's resume reads like a poster for patriotism. A native of Kansas, he arrived in South Carolina to attend The Citadel, joining the Army's Field Artillery branch after graduation in 1962.

After his military service, Governor James B. Edwards recruited him as a personnel officer, and in this position he was instrumental in setting up an Ethics Committee for state employees. He continued in that work for 23 years, and was awarded the Order of the Silver Crescent by Governor Jim Hodges in 1999.

Baker's "Awards Wall" displays numerous plaques and citations, including an Honorary Kentucky Colonel after his testimony in that state regarding ethics.

He wrote a book, "Cadets in Gray," published in 1989. He is proud of his participation in the planning for the Veterans Monument in Lexington, dedicated in November 2002.

Gary Baker enjoys being part of Task Force Marshall. He says that the Army makes use of some elite Navy personnel who receive intensive combat training at Fort Jackson before being sent directly overseas. When these units are departing our community, the task force gives them a big send-off at the airport, furnishing food and fellowship as thanks for their service.

He is currently on his third tour of serving as Commander of American Legion Post 7. He says that Lexington County is now home for some 24,000 military veterans, and his office has seen a dramatic increase in claim requests in the past few years.

The office has put out a newsletter, which is no longer being printed and mailed due to budgetary limitations, but is available online: www.Lex-Co.com/depts/veteransaffairs.

by Jackie Perrone

Source Lexington Life Magazine June 2010



**Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
6439 Garners Ferry Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29209-1639**

June 10, 2010

In Reply Refer To: 544/00/PAO

Dear Congressional Liaisons and Veterans Service Officers:

Please be informed that effective July 1, 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs charge for a 30-day or less supply of medication provided on an outpatient basis for treatment of a non-serviced connected condition will increase from \$8 to \$9 for Veterans who generally have higher incomes and no service connected disabilities – referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8. As a result, the charge for a 60-day supply of medication will be \$18 and for a 90-day supply will be \$27.

Veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 will not be impacted by this change and will continue to pay \$8 for each 30-day or less supply of medication provided for a non-service connected condition unless otherwise exempted. Priority Groups 2 through 6 Veterans will also continue to have a cap on the amount they can be charged in a calendar year of \$960.

Veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a disability rated 50 percent or greater – enrolled in Priority Group 1 - are exempt from this co-pay.

VA generally sets its outpatient medication co-pay rate based upon a regulation which ties the rate to the Medical Consumer Price Index for prescription drugs.

We understand that this change may result in a financial hardship for certain Veterans and encourage Veterans to contact us at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or their local VA health care facility. For benefits questions concerning co-pays or other programs, please contact us at the above number or visit our health eligibility Web site at www.va.gov/healtheligibility.

Sincerely yours,

Priscilla Creamer
Public Affairs Officer

Flag Folding Ceremony

The flag folding ceremony described by the Uniformed Services is a dramatic and uplifting way to honor the flag on special days, like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, and is sometimes used at retirement ceremonies.

Here is a typical sequence of the reading:

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

