



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

December 2012

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From the Director...

I do a lot of travelling in the county every month and on many of these trips I have noticed a great amount of patriotism and I want to thank everyone for that. There are some businesses and schools displaying tattered or worn U.S. flags and this is not the proper display of our flag. I hope to educate our citizens at these places on the Flag Code under Title 4 of the U.S. Code. Additionally, there are other establishments who display the flag 24 hours a day and the Flag Code requires the flag to be illuminated if flown at night. A worn flag should be replaced and properly disposed of in a dignified ceremony. Many Veteran Service Organizations have flag disposal ceremonies several times a year and our office accepts these to deliver to those organizations. Please show respect for our flag and encourage others by properly displaying it and properly disposing of it when the time comes.

Our office has seen a recent change with the departure of Janet Smith last month. Janet was one of our case workers and was with us for 18 months and has moved on to other work with special needs children. We wish her well in that endeavor and thank her for serving the Veterans of Lexington County.

I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!

It is an honor to serve Lexington County!

MERRY CHRISTMAS



*FROM YOUR VA OFFICE
STAFF*

*ED, JENNIFER, AND
MARGARET*



AT-A-GLANCE
December

Thursday, December 6th	Gaston/Swansea Outreach
Friday, December 7th	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Volunteer Van Driver Luncheon from 12-2pm Chapin Outreach Cancelled
Saturday, December 8th	Hanukkah begins @ sundown
Thursday, December 13th	Cayce/West Columbia Outreach Cancelled
Friday, December 14th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Saturday, December 15th	Wreaths Across America @ Ft. Jackson Cemetery from 12 - 2pm
Friday, December 21st	Winter begins
Monday, December 24th	Christmas Eve County Offices Closed/No van
Tuesday, December 25th	Christmas Day County Offices Closed
Wednesday, December 26th	Kwanzaa begins County Offices Closed/No Van
Tuesday, January 1st	New Years Day County Offices Closed

- Purple—Holidays/Special Days
- Blue—Outreach dates
- Red—County Offices Closed/No van scheduled
- Black—Director’s appearances in the County
- Pink—Special Events throughout the County
- Orange—Special event—Director Out of Office
- Dark Green—Special Notices
- Red—County Office Closed



Appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with our Veterans Counselors.



Lexington, SC.

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**DECEMBER DATES FOR
OUTREACH PROGRAM**

December 6th- Gaston/Swansea Outreach
Chapin Outreach **Canceled**
Cayce/W. Columbia Outreach **Canceled**
December 14th—Batesburg/Leesville Outreach

**TOLL-FREE
TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Lexington Main Office: 785-8400

From Batesburg/Leesville: 332-8400

From Chapin: 941-0231

We are now emailing copies of the newsletter. Please contact the office to be added to the newsletter email list.

New Office Policy



Please call the office to schedule an appointment for outreach in all four areas. Walk-ins will be seen after appointments if time permits.



Requesting Military Medals and Records

There are several ways to get a replacement DD214.

1. Check with your last base. If you didn't separate too long ago, there is a chance that the military separations section of your old base may have a digital copy of your DD 214. It is best to go in person and make the request rather than to do it by phone.
2. Look at the last place of residence you put on record. Many Veterans forget to change their place of residence, which can be different from where they started their career. Your copy of your DD 214 could have been mailed there if the address change wasn't made.
3. Research the VA Regional Office for a copy of your DD 214 if you filed a disability claim within the past five years. You can't even register into their system until you have a DD 214.
4. Log onto the Veteran Records website. Follow instructions on how to get your DD 214. The instructions do include faxing or mailing forms that require your signature and your Social Security number. They have to be received within 20 days of the request, so don't delay.
5. VAMC if they are enrolled



For information about obtaining military records, please visit the Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which is part of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).



Information and advice from NARA is as follows: The preferred method of submitting a request to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is via the Internet. In some cases using a browser other than Internet Explorer may create problems with data entry. As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. The web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating the mailroom processing time. You may access this application at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. Then proceed with the following steps:

Select Veterans Service Records On this page you have two options.

A—Request Military Service records—the first bullet point—request records online with eVetRecs

1. Launch the eVetRecs system to start your request online. This brings up the eVetRecs system

A—Once in the eVetRecs system, you will see a page with four steps. Select the continue button and follow along with the drop down boxes.

B—At the end on the session, you will need to print out a signature page to fax in to the NPRC.

2. Download SF-180 to mail or fax your request

B—Replace lost medals or awards

If you select the replace lost medals or awards icon, then just follow the instructions for your corresponding branch of service or you can also request them on the same form while requesting your DD214, in the comments section.

Tips & Warnings:

1. Be patient with the process. It can take a few weeks to get a copy of your records. It may be even longer if you were discharged before 1973 because a fire at the Central Repository For Records in St. Louis destroyed 80 percent of the records housed.
2. Record a copy of your DD214 with your local VA office in case you misplace it in the future.
3. The National Personnel Records Center usually processes requests within 10 working days of receipt. Many factors may alter that time including work load, current volume of requests, and whether your records are coming from a stateside base or an overseas location in the case of recently retired or separated military members.



Prints for Sale



We have several copies of the Veterans Memorial and Gibson Pond prints for sale in our office. The Gibson Pond print is 32x24 and the Monument print is 24x15.



Both are suitable for framing. The cost is \$10.00 each. The proceeds will be placed in our Veteran's Fund and/or Van Fund. Your donation is tax-deductible and a receipt can be provided. Come by the office to have a closer look at the prints. Please stop by our office M-F from 8 to 5 to purchase one or more of these beautiful prints!

"Never give in...never, never, never in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force: never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."



- Winston Churchill.

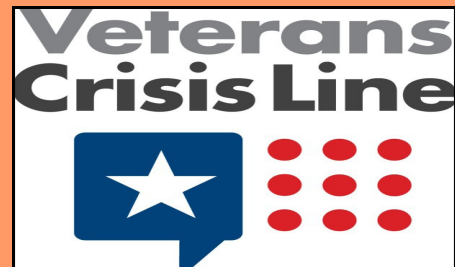
Just a Reminder...

Lexington County Offices will be closed on Monday, December 24th through Wednesday, December 26th for the Christmas holidays. County offices will also be closed on Tuesday, January 1st for New Year's Day.



There will be no DAV van running the week of December 24th through December 28th.

Veterans Crisis Line



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Pictures from the 2012 Lexington County Veterans Parade.



Grand Marshalls—Blue Star Mothers



County Councilman Bobby Keisler
with Lexington County Veterans



Ft. Jackson Band



Mobile Vet Center



White Knoll High School NJROTC



War Dogs

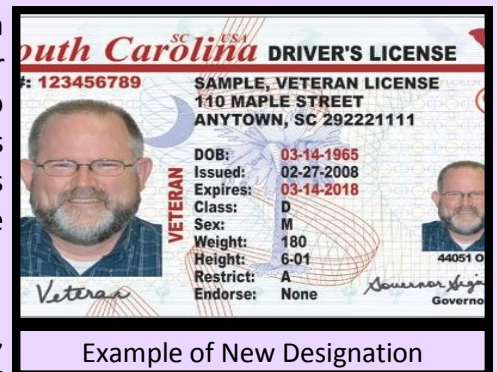
New Drivers License Information

The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced on September 7, 2012, the availability of a "VETERAN" designation on driver licenses, identification cards and beginner permits for individuals who served honorably in the United States Armed Forces.

The VETERAN designation applies only to individuals who served honorably as members of the United States Armed Forces. To apply, Veterans must present their Form DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which indicates an honorable discharge. No other proof of service will be accepted. Military dependents, spouses, or civilian employees on military bases are not eligible.

The cost to add VETERAN designation to a driver license, identification card or beginner permit is \$1.00. If a customer adds the designation without changing or renewing his license, he will pay only the \$1.00 fee. However, if the customer conducts another license transaction, he will pay \$1.00 plus the required transaction fee. For example, a customer that adds the designation when he renews his 10-year driver license would pay \$25.00 plus the \$1.00 fee. A customer who changes his address and adds the designation would pay \$10.00 plus the \$1.00 fee. Each time a customer changes or renews his credential, he must pay an additional \$1.00 fee to add the designation.

Because state law requires documentation of military service, Veterans applying for the designation must visit a DMV office. To get the best service in the shortest amount of time, DMV recommends that customers visit the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Customers should also remember that the days before and after a holiday are extremely busy at DMV.



Volunteers needed

County Council Needs You!



Veterans are 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 you would need to be present around 4 to 4:15pm. Contact the office at 803-785-8400 if you are interested.

Looking for Volunteer Van Drivers

The van runs on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, taking Veterans to appointments at DORN VAMC for their scheduled appointments between 9am and 1pm. If you can volunteer to drive the DAV van at least 1 day a month, contact the office at 803-785-8400.





Military Mentoring Program

What is the Military Mentoring Program?

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Military Mentoring Program supports children in military families and engages active duty, reserve or retired military personnel as volunteer mentors. Our staff will carefully match mentors and mentees in long-term, one-to-one friendships and provide professional mentoring support for the volunteers, children and families throughout the life of the match. Backed by independent studies, Big Brothers Big Sisters holds itself accountable for helping children succeed in school, avoid risky behaviors, and gain confidence.

Why We Do It

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Columbia is committed to supporting our nation's military personnel and their families. We seek to provide strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change the lives of children and youth for the better. Our Case Managers and mentors are here to:

1. Strengthen the connection between military parents and children
2. Respect and reinforce family values
3. Promote the educational success of military children

A need also exists to engage military service members in civilian community service. Recent research found that 90% of Veterans want to serve other Veterans and military families and 86% want to serve at-risk youth.

About the Program

Big Brothers Big Sisters programs are offered to families **at no cost**. Bigs (concerned and committed adult volunteers) and Littles (children age 9-16) come together in one of two programs:

1. **Community-based Mentoring:** Volunteer Bigs provide their Littles with 4-6 hours per month of one-to-one time and attention. In this program, the Bigs usually picks the Littles up at their home, takes them on an outing to share fun activities and then brings them home.
2. **Site-based Mentoring:** Bigs and Littles meet once a week to talk and have fun at a designated site, which may include facilities operated by Fort Jackson's Child, Youth and School Services, schools or select Boys & Girls Club locations.

Get Involved

To volunteer or enroll a child, please contact Tanza Cooper or Emily Hebert by phone at (803) 691-5700 or by e-mail at tanza@bbbsgc.org or emily@bbbsgc.org.



WREATHS-ACROSS-AMERICA.ORG
REMEMBER - HONOR - TEACH

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 2011, Wreaths Across America and our national network of volunteers laid over 320,000 memorial wreaths at 741 locations in the United States and around the world. This was accomplished with help from 1185 fundraising groups, 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 Veterans' parade, stopping at schools, monuments, Veterans' 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 Veterans 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 9th, 2012

Start of World's Longest Veterans Parade from Maine to participating locations all across the Country

Monday, December 10th, 12:00 noon S.C. Veterans Memorial on the South Carolina State House grounds, and in all 50 States and Puerto Rico

Saturday December 15th, 12:00 noon (EST) Ft. Jackson National Cemetery, 4170 Percival Rd. Columbia, SC 29229

Simultaneous wreath laying ceremonies will be held at over 750 locations all around the World.

For more information visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org, or call 877-385-9504.
Locally, you can contact Carol Davis at waftjackson@yahoo.com or call (803) 739-2774



Tax ID 20-8362270

Wreath Sponsorship Form

*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state and national Veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December. Wreaths may be purchased online at

www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(To receive our FREE email newsletter)

Sponsoring Group ID Number: SCNDV001

For every 2 wreaths purchased on this form, Wreaths Across America receives a 3rd one free.

Cemetery Designation: Fort Jackson National Cemetery, Columbia, SC

Cemetery ID Number: SCFJNC

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths or more	\$15.00 each wreath		
WAA Pins (25 pins per pack)	\$10.00 / pk		
WAA Patch	\$3.00 each		
		Grand Total	

****WE DO NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS****

Please make all checks payable to:

Wreaths Across America TM

P.O.Box 3356

West Columbia, SC 29171

Local Contact:

Carol Davis (803) 739-2774

Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

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

Support and Donate to the WAR DOG MEMORIAL FUND

Veteran's Memorial Park ★



Veteran's Memorial Park in Columbia, S.C. where the S.C. Vietnam Memorial stands is the site for the proposed "War Dog Memorial". Funds and support are being raised to make this worthy tribute to all military working dogs a reality.

S.C. Vietnam Monument ★



Proposed South Carolina War Dog Monument ★



Military working dogs have fought alongside and saved the lives of thousands of American soldier's throughout our history. Many were killed in action . Those who fought alongside these dogs have long considered them their fellow soldier with great reverence. It is only fitting that a memorial honoring them be erected in their memory and those whom they saved and protected. Please donate today. For more info-

Contact:

Allen Marshall: 803-252-6636 /

Johnny Mayo: 803-767-6756

Email: K9heroes@att.net

Website: www.wardogmemorialfund.com

**S.C. Memorial Park Fund / "War Dog Memorial Fund"
c/o Smith Barney - PO Box 7277 - Columbia, SC 29202**

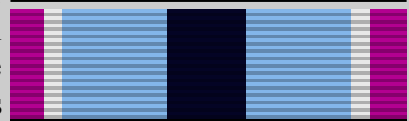
*** All Contributions are Tax Deductible**

Featured Medal: **Humanitarian Service Medal**

The Humanitarian Service Medal is a military service medal of the United States armed forces which was created on January 19, 1977 by President Gerald Ford under Executive Order 11965. This medal is awarded to any member of the United States military (including Reserve and National Guard members) who distinguish themselves by meritorious participation in specified military acts or operations of a humanitarian nature.

This medal is presented as an individual service medal. The activities for which the Humanitarian Service Medal may be authorized are designated by the United States Department of Defense. Such activities include natural disaster relief, evacuation of non-combatants from a hostile area, or humanitarian support to refugees. This medal may *not* be awarded for services rendered in domestic disturbances involving law enforcement, equal rights demonstrations, or protection of property. This medal may also not be presented if either the Armed Forces Service Medal or Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was presented for the same period of service.

The Humanitarian Service Medal is retroactive to April 1, 1975. Multiple awards of the medal are authorized with service stars denoting additional awards.



Picture of Humanitarian Service Medal and Ribbon



For basic information and questions,
please check out our webpage at
www.lex-co.sc.gov/departments/DeptRZ/va/Pages/index.aspx

We have also moved the
Veterans Service Organizations in Lexington County
to our Webpage.

The VA hospital is offering flu shots

Seasonal flu shots are now available for all registered and enrolled Veterans.

Veterans can receive the flu shot during their regularly scheduled Primary Care or Specialty Care appointments or Primary Care Walk-in visits. Walk-ins are accepted Monday through Friday (except for Federal Holidays) between the hours of 8am to 4pm.



Coming in the Next Issue... Homeless Veterans