



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

March/April 2020



Lexington, SC.

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**At a Glance Calendar
March & April**

For a list of events in Lexington County for March & April See page 5 - Happenings Around Lexington County

Weekly on Tuesdays in March Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Thursday, March 5th Gaston Outreach

Friday, March 6th Chapin Outreach

Sunday, March 8th Daylight Savings Time Begins

Tuesday, March 10th Batesburg/Leesville Outreach County Council Meeting

Saturday, March 14th Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information see page 11

Tuesday, March 17th St. Patrick's Day

Thursday, March 19th Spring Begins

Tuesday, March 24th County Council Meeting

Monday, March 30th through Friday, April 3rd SCACVAO spring conference in Greenville, SC

Weekly on Tuesdays in April Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon

Wednesday, April 1st April Fool's Day

Saturday, April 11th Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information see page 11

Tuesday, April 14th Batesburg/Leesville Outreach County Council Meeting

Wednesday, April 15th Tax Day

Sunday, April 19th Easter Sunday

Tuesday, April 28th County Council Meeting

From the Director...

As spring begins let us renew our faith in America and what she stands for: freedom and democracy. This comes with a price, the price all our Veterans paid with their service to our country. The price all of our active duty folks pay every day for all Americans as they serve. The price costs even more with the ultimate sacrifice paid by those who never made it home alive.

We recently reached a milestone in our office with the second anniversary in our new office complex. It is hard to believe two years have swiftly passed and we love working in it and showing it off to our Veterans. We receive many compliments on it from those we have served for many years and those we just started serving. All are welcome for a tour any day we are open for business.

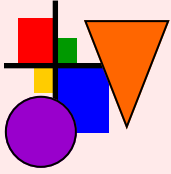
We are filing Blue Water Navy claims for those Veterans who have disabilities on the Agent Orange list. You will need medical evidence to show you have a diagnosed disability on the list and we will be delighted to file a VA claim for you. There is certain criteria and eligibility and we will discuss that with you on the appointment.

Enjoying the journey,

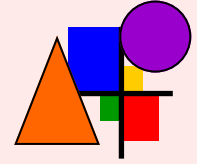


CALENDAR KEY

- Purple—Holidays/Special Days
- Blue—Outreach dates
- Red—County Offices Closed, and Special Notices
- Black—Director's appearances in the County
- Brown—County Council Meetings
- Pink—Special Events throughout the County
- Orange—Director Out of Office
- Green—Lexington County Veterans Group Meetings



Aid & Attendance Benefits



A Veteran can receive housebound or aid and attendance benefits through the VA in one of two ways. The first is if you are a 100% service-connected Veteran; the other is through the non-service connected pension program. A surviving spouse can receive this benefit through survivor's benefits.

For service-connected Veterans

If a Veteran is service-connected at the 100% rate and is housebound, bedridden, or is so helpless as to need the aid and attendance of another person, then payment of additional Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) can be considered. The amount of SMC will vary depending on the level of disability. The service-connected disabilities must be why the Veteran needs the aid and attendance.

For non-service connected Veterans

Veterans who are eligible for VA pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person may be eligible for an additional monetary payment. Veterans who are eligible for a VA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, and they are not paid without eligibility to pension.



Since Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances increase the pension amount, people who are not eligible for a basic pension due to excessive income may be eligible for pension at these increased rates. A Veteran may not receive aid and attendance benefits and housebound benefits at the same time.

For Surviving Spouses

Surviving spouses that are eligible for either DIC or surviving spouse pension may also qualify for housebound or aid and attendance benefits. The surviving spouse must meet the same healthcare requirement as listed above for a Veteran.

Aid & Attendance (A&A)

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) increased monthly pension amount may be added to your monthly pension amount if you meet one of the following conditions: 1 - You require the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting yourself from the hazards of your daily environment. 2 - You are bedridden, in that your disability or disabilities requires that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment. 3 - You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity. 4 - Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

Housebound

This increase monthly pension amount may be added to your monthly pension amount when you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of permanent disability.

Continued on page 4

Aid and Attendance Benefits continued from page 3

You may apply for A&A or housebound benefits through our office or by writing the VA regional office where you filed a claim. If the regional office of jurisdiction is not known, you may file the request with any VA regional office. You should include copies of any evidence, preferably a report from an attending physician, validating the need for A&A or housebound type care. The report should have sufficient detail to determine whether there is disease or injury producing physical or mental impairment, loss of coordination, or conditions affecting the ability to dress and undress, to feed oneself, to attend to the wants of nature, and to keep oneself ordinarily clean and presentable. Whether the claim is for A&A or housebound, the report should indicate how well the applicant gets around, where the applicant goes, and what he or she is able to do during a typical day. This can be a statement from the attending physician or a VA form 21-2680 (examination for housebound status or permanent need for regular aid and attendance). There are other forms to complete depending on whether the Veteran or surviving spouse is at home with caregivers, in an assisted living or in a nursing home. Our office can help you determine which additional forms are needed.



MARCH IS
NATIONAL
COLON
CANCER
AWARENESS
MONTH!



APRIL IS
NATIONAL
CHILD
ABUSE
PREVENTION
MONTH!

County Council Needs You!



Veterans are still 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 please be present around 4:15pm.

**Contact the office at 803-785-8400,
if you are interested.**

The office would like to thank *Dennis Cline, Richard Niehe, David Kerr and Mike Gordon*. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of January and February.

THANKS



Happenings Around Lexington County During the Months of March & April

Saturday, March 14th

Lexington Race Against Hunger
Includes 5 & 10K runs and a 1 mile fun run.
Lexington High School, 2463 Augusta Hwy
Starts at 8am. For more information,
visit their website at www.lrah.org.



Saturday, March 28th

Riverbanks Run
5K race that benefits wildlife conversation.
Starts @ 7:30am. For more information,
visit their website at riverbanks.org/events.



Thursday, April 16th
through
Sunday, April 19th

Midlands Plant & Flower Show
at the State Farmers Market
Thursday – Saturday 8am to 6pm
Sunday 10am to 4pm
For more information, contact Brad Boozer or
Sonia Brazell at 803-737-4664 or
bboozer@scda.sc.gov/sbrazell@scda.sc.gov.



Friday, April 24th

Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Gardens
7 to 9:30pm
For more information, visit their website at
riverbanks.org/events.



**March is National
Noodle Month!**

**April is National
Pecan Month!**



Spring Forward!

Sunday, March 8th



Daylight Savings Begins

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of March & April?



March 1, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps.

March 3, 1847 - Inventor Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland.

March 6, 1836 - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna.

March 10, 1862 - The first issue of U.S. government paper money occurred as \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills began circulation.

March 14, 1879 - Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany.

March 15, 1767 - Andrew Jackson was born in a log cabin in Waxhaw, South Carolina.

March 24, 1874 - Harry Houdini was born (as Erik Weisz) in Budapest, Hungary.

March 31, 1968 - President Lyndon Johnson made a surprise announcement that he would not seek re-election as a result of the Vietnam conflict.

April 3, 1860 - The Pony Express service began as the first rider departed Missouri.

April 4, 1968 - Civil Rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed by a sniper in Memphis, Tennessee.

April 9, 1865 - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended.

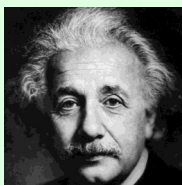
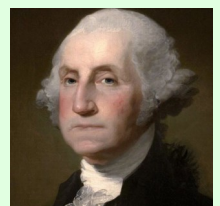
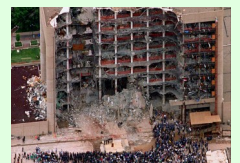
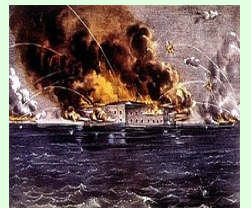
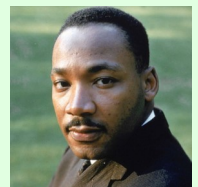
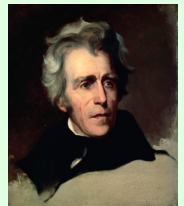
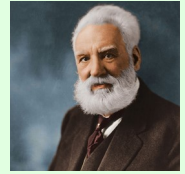
April 12, 1861 - The American Civil War began as Confederate troops at 4:30 a.m. fired upon Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.

April 14, 1828 - The first dictionary of American-style English was published by Noah Webster.

April 19, 1995 - At 9:02 a.m., a massive car-bomb explosion destroyed the entire side of a nine story federal building in Oklahoma City.

April 26, 1785 - American artist and naturalist John J. Audubon was born in Haiti.

April 30, 1789 - George Washington became the first U.S. President.



UPCOMING **ELECTIONS**



Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Primary Elections

For more information, please call the Lexington County Registration and Elections office at 803-785-8361.



Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 or text 838255.

The Veterans Crisis line is a free, anonymous, confidential resource that's available to anyone, even if you're not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare. The Veterans Crisis Line does not charge for texting to 838255, but message and data rates may apply.

"Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."

- Adlai Stevenson



"Why I Served Series"

Our County Public Information Officer, Harrison Cahill, has started a "Why I Served Series." He would like to record some video stories of Veterans explaining why they served. If you are interested or know of a Veteran who would be, please call Harrison at (803) 212-5553 or email him at hcahill@lex-co.com to set this up. He records the interviews in our conference room, where you will have privacy and can take your time in being interviewed. Harrison usually pares down these interviews to three to five minute videos that are shown on the Lexington County Facebook page and the TV in our office.

Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to your Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that is being deposited. If you are changing your direct deposit, you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.



Join the force behind the forces.



South Carolina

Become a USO South Carolina volunteer today!

www.volunteers.uso.org

Burn Pits

The use of burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside the United States such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Smoke from these pits contained substances that may have short- and long-term health effects, especially for those who were exposed for long periods or those more prone to illness such as individuals with pre-existing asthma or other lung or heart conditions. Toxins in burn pit smoke may affect the skin, eyes, respiratory and cardiovascular systems, gastrointestinal tract and internal organs. Veterans who were closer to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk. Health effects depend on a number of other factors, such as the kind of waste being burned and wind direction. Most of the irritation is temporary and resolves once the exposure is gone. This includes eye irritation and burning, coughing and throat irritation, breathing difficulties, and skin itching and rashes. The high level of fine dust and pollution common in Iraq and Afghanistan may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits, according to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report. Waste products in burn pits include, but are not limited to: chemicals, paint, medical and human waste, metal/aluminum cans, munitions and other unexploded ordnance, petroleum and lubricant products, plastics, rubber, wood, and discarded food. Burning waste in open air pits can cause more pollution than controlled burning, such as in an incinerator. At this time, research does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure to burn pits. The VA continues to study the health of deployed Veterans.

If you are concerned about your exposure to burn pits, talk to your health care provider or contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator at the nearest VA facility. VA health care is available to all combat Veterans for conditions possibly related to service for five years after discharge. Join the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry and complete the free voluntary medical evaluation, to help the VA learn more about potential health effects. Check your eligibility and sign up through an online questionnaire at <https://veteran.mobliehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry>. Eligible Veterans and service members include those who served in:

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990

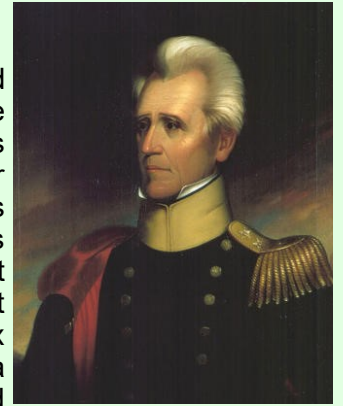
In total, 195,237 Veterans and service members completed and submitted the registry questionnaire between April 25, 2014 and February 5, 2020. It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later. You can print and use your completed questionnaire to discuss concerns with your provider. VA providers can also access an online copy of your questionnaire.

Important points about the Burn Pit Registry:

- No cost to participate
- Not a disability compensation questionnaire or required for other VA benefits
- Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary
- Based on Veterans'/service members' recollection of service, not on their military records
- Veterans'/service members' family members are not eligible to participate

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to burn pits during military service. The VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis.

The History of Andrew Jackson



Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson and two of their sons, Hugh and Robert, emigrated from Ireland in 1765. They settled in the Waxhaws settlement located near the North Carolina and South Carolina border. Their third son, Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767, near Lancaster, South Carolina. He and his two older brothers were raised by his widowed mother as his father, for whom he was named, died shortly before he was born. At only 13, Andrew, along with his brothers, joined the patriotic cause and volunteered to fight the British. His oldest brother Hugh died of heat stroke in 1779. In 1781, Jackson and his brother Robert were captured. During their captivity, both Andrew and Robert contracted smallpox in prison and were gravely ill when their mother arranged for their release in a prisoner exchange. Shortly after their release, Robert succumbed to the illness and died. After Jackson recovered, his mother traveled to Charleston to aid the war effort by nursing injured and sick soldiers. Tragically, while there, she contracted cholera and died, leaving Jackson an orphan at the young age of 14.

Jackson read law in his late teens and earned admission to the North Carolina bar in 1787. He soon moved west of the Appalachians to the region that would soon become the state of Tennessee, and began working as a prosecuting attorney in the settlement that became Nashville. He later set up his own private practice and met and married Rachel (Donelson) Robards, the daughter of a local colonel. Jackson grew prosperous as a planter and slave-owner and built a mansion, the Hermitage, near Nashville, TN. In 1796, Jackson joined a convention charged with drafting the new Tennessee state constitution and became the first man to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Tennessee. Though he declined to seek reelection and returned home in March 1797, he was almost immediately elected to the U.S. Senate. Jackson resigned a year later and was elected judge of Tennessee's superior court. He was later chosen to head the state militia, a position he held when war broke out with Great Britain in 1812.



He was ordered to lead 1,500 troops south to Natchez and to eventually defend New Orleans. Believing the threat to New Orleans abated, the U.S. War Department ordered the immediate dismissal of Jackson's forces making no offer to compensate the troops or provide for their food or return travel to Tennessee. Outraged, Jackson successfully lead his poorly provisioned army back to Tennessee intact but he also encouraged them by sharing in all the hardships they faced along with them. His troops compared Jackson's toughness to a hickory tree and nicknamed him "Old Hickory." Jackson's military career made him a national hero and brought to him increased wealth and opportunities.

Soon, Jackson's countrymen would introduce him as a candidate for President of the United States. Jackson ran for President in 1828 and won by a landslide over John Quincy Adams, becoming the seventh President of the United States. Jackson's time as president would mark a major historical shift for the United States. Jackson took office with great expectations to cleanse government of corruption and restore the nation's finances. Jackson faced the threat of secession by South Carolina over what opponents called the "Tariff of Abominations." In Congress, Henry Clay led the effort to reauthorize the Second Bank of the United States. In 1835, Jackson became the only president to completely pay off the national debt, fulfilling a longtime goal. His presidency marked the beginning of the ascendancy of the party "spoils system" in American politics. In 1830, Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which forcibly relocated most members of the Native American tribes in the South to Indian Territory, also known as the "Trail of Tears. Jackson opposed the abolitionist movement, which grew stronger in his second term. In foreign affairs, Jackson's administration concluded a "most favored nation" treaty with Great Britain, settled claims of damages against France from the Napoleonic Wars, and recognized the Republic of Texas. In January 1835, he survived the first assassination attempt on a sitting president. Jackson left his physical mark on the White House by having the north portico completed, redecorating several rooms (most notably the East Room) and making various improvements to the service buildings and grounds including adding running water and installing indoor toilets to the White House.

Continued on page 10



Appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with our Veterans Benefits Counselors. You can call 803-785-8400 to schedule an appointment. Please allow 24 hours for a return call.

Reminder

The VA releases updated DOD list identifying Agent Orange sites outside of Vietnam

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released in January an updated Department of Defense (DOD) list of locations outside of Vietnam where tactical herbicides were used, tested or stored by the United States military. This update was necessary to improve accuracy and communication of information. The VA depends on the DOD to provide information regarding in-service environmental exposure for disability claims based on exposure to herbicides outside of Vietnam.

The DOD conducted a thorough review of research, reports and government publications in response to a November 2018 Government Accountability Office report. The DOD will continue to be responsive to the needs of our interagency partners in all matters related to taking care of both current and former service members. The updated list includes Agents Orange, Pink, Green, Purple, Blue and White and other chemicals and will be updated as verifiable information becomes available.

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including an Agent Orange Registry health exam, health care and disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Their dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits. To see the list, visit their website at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/index.asp.

Did you know...

Any National Guard member or Reservist who is entitled to retired pay for non-regular service or, would be entitled to retired pay for non-regular service, now has Veteran status. To see if you qualify for any benefits, check with your local VA regional office.

The History of Andrew Jackson continued from page 9

Andrew Jackson left Washington for home on March 7, 1837. During his final years, Jackson experienced the misery of constant infections, pain, and vision and hearing problems. Finally, on June 8, 1845, surrounded by his loved ones, he died in his bedroom at The Hermitage in Nashville, TN. He was buried two days later in The Hermitage garden with nearly ten thousand people in attendance.



When Jackson vacated office in March 1837, he left his mark on the presidency and forever changed the course of American history. Through his actions and tenure as president, Jackson squarely set the Executive Branch on an equal footing with Congress in terms of power and ability to shape law and government policies. Jackson preserved and defended the Union against threats from nullifiers and secessionists. Nations across the globe viewed the United States with newfound respect due to Jackson's management of foreign affairs. Most importantly, however, Jackson's presidency pushed the nation further toward democracy, but much work remained in granting equal rights and freedoms to those still oppressed in the United States. Surveys of historians and scholars have ranked Jackson favorably among U.S. presidents. Without fail, every generation of historians has reshaped and revised our understanding of Jackson and will no doubt continue to do so. The reason is simple; Andrew Jackson is inextricably woven into the fabric of America.

Lexington County Veterans Group

All Honorably Discharged Lexington County Veterans are invited to attend the weekly meetings. The group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon in the auditorium at 605 West Main Street in Lexington. The group meets for Health Issues and PTSD counseling with a licensed counselor.

On the second Tuesday of each month, they meet at a different local restaurant for food and fellowship. Check their website for the location.

The Veterans group also participates in various social activities such as group lunches, group dinners with wives/significant other, boat trips on Lake Murray, participation in the Lexington County Veterans parade and other general group tours.



Veteran Wives Support Group

Meets 1st Friday of each month

2 to 4pm

Crossroads Counseling Center

130A Whiteford Way

Lexington, SC 29072

*For further information, please visit their website at
lex-coveteransgroup.com or
contact our office at 803-785-8400.*

Dang-it Dolls Workshops

Saturday, March 14th at the Platt Springs UMC, 3215 Platt Springs Road, West Columbia, SC

Saturday, April 11th at the Cayce Masonic Lodge, 1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.

Both dates are from 10 am to 2 pm.



*****Please note the change in venue for the March 14th date*****

Come for an hour, or spend the day. All help is appreciated.
If you are a student, & need community service hours for class credit,
please keep us in mind.

Grab a friend and come join in with the stuffing and decorating of the dolls so we can bring smiles and stress relief to our service men and women.

To date, with your help, we have shipped over 200,000 Dang-it Dolls all over the world.
We have volunteers ranging in age from 5 years to 90 years old.

There is something for everyone to do & this is the one place where
THE MORE THE MERRIER really counts.

Just a reminder, Wal-Mart is only carrying minimal amounts of the Morning Glory stuffing in their stores, but it can be ordered from them on-line and shipped free to the store for a little less than the price we were paying. This is the only stuffing we use for the dolls as the other brands are too soft and silky for our purpose. A 5 pound box costs approximately \$13.00.

The average cost of shipping a box of 25 to 30 dolls is \$35.00.

We can always use stuffing donations. We are also in need of funds to ship the dolls.

Any help you can give will be appreciated.
For more information, contact Carol Davis at omsrd@yahoo.com.

Fisher House



A Fisher House is, "a home away from home" for families and Caregivers of Veterans and Active Duty Military receiving treatment at major military and VA medical facilities. VA Fisher House accommodations are provided at no cost to guests, and located within walking distance of the treatment facility.

The VA Fisher Houses provides temporary accommodations at no cost for Veterans, Active Duty Military, their families and Caregivers while receiving treatment through a VA Medical Facility.

As of December 2019, there are 86 Fisher Houses located in the US, Germany and the United Kingdom on military installations and VA medical facilities. Typically, the houses are 5,000 to 16,800 square foot homes donated by the Fisher family and Fisher House Foundation. Each house is designed to provide 8 to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region. The houses can accommodate 16 to 42 family members. They feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room and an inviting living room with library, and toys for children. Newest houses are 100% handicap accessible and include elevators. A Fisher House is a temporary residence and is not a treatment facility, hospice or counseling center. The program began in 1990, and has offered more than eight million days of lodging to more than 350,000 families.

In September 2016, the WJB Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center completed the application process for a Fisher House to be built on the facility property in Columbia, South Carolina. On November 8, 2016, facility leadership was notified that Dorn's proposal had been approved. The Fisher House Board meets the last Tuesday of every month at the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. They are in the campaign stage now raising money with the ground breaking scheduled in November 2020.

For more information, go to the Fisher House website (<http://www.fisherhouse.org>)

The VA Makes Progress on Resolution of Legacy Appeals

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Appeals Management Office (AMO) significantly reduced disability compensation legacy appeals inventory during the last nine months as part of the department's long-term legacy resolution plan.

This inventory includes Notices of Disagreement (NOD) and substantive appeals filed in the "legacy" system – the appeals process in place prior to implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA). VBA lowered this inventory from a high of 292,452 in March 2016, to 96,350 on Dec. 31, 2019, despite receiving 770,571 new NOD and substantive appeals during that period.

Veterans who have been waiting for their decisions can trust that the VA is working towards getting them the benefits and services they deserve. Completing legacy Notices of Disagreement and substantive appeals will be an important step in meeting this obligation. The VBA is on track to eliminate its NOD and substantive appeals inventory by July 4. More information on the VA appeals process can be found at <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp>.



DID YOU KNOW?

The new parking garage is open on the campus of the VAMC Dorn in Columbia. It is located near building 106.





Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act claims now being determined

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began deciding claims for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 at 12:01 am, January 1, 2020. The Act extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, that include toxins such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Signed into law June 25, 2019, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served no more than 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between January 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between January 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971. These Veterans can now apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of 14 conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides. Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching the term "Agent Orange" on www.va.gov. The VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the National Archives and Records Administration to support faster claims decisions. These efforts will positively impact the claims process for Veterans filing for these benefits.

To be eligible a Veteran must have served in the identified locations during the specified time period and currently have a condition(s) associated with herbicide exposures, such as Agent Orange. Blue Water Navy claims are being processed under current prioritization criteria; however, special priority is being given to Veterans who are over the age of 85 or have a terminal condition. Qualifying recipients include affected Veterans who are still living and certain survivors of deceased BWN and Korean DMZ Veterans.

Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran's service if the Veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with herbicides such as Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida if their parent is or was a Veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period.

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits or call our office and we can assist you. BWN Veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, Veterans may use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. As a result of the new law, the VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal.



Happy Easter



DID YOU KNOW...



Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters.

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.



About Our Office

On March 22, 1945 the SC General Assembly adopted a bill creating a VA office in each of the state's 46 counties. The Lexington County VA Director is appointed by the Lexington County delegation. This office is employed by Lexington County; not the Federal VA. The Lexington County Veterans' Affairs Office is an advocate for Veterans and their surviving dependents. We provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and for VA medical care. The Lexington County VA Office assists former and present members of the US Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: service connected disabilities and non-service connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits. We are not trained in Social Security or Department of Defense Benefits but can assist with some of these forms. Our office also provides off-site appointments at three of the County libraries once a month and we can provide home visits on a case by case basis.

OUTREACH DATES AND TIMES



Batesburg/Leesville Outreach is the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Batesburg/Leesville Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

(PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DAY OF THE WEEK FOR THIS OUTREACH HAS BEEN CHANGED)

Chapin Outreach is the 1st Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach is the 1st Thursday of the month at the Gaston Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



*Appointments are strongly encouraged.
Call the office at 803-785-8400 to schedule a time.*

There will be no outreach in Gaston or Chapin during the month of April.

The VA has a website anyone can access for all VA questions, SEP user guides, regulations, policies, laws and any other VA resources. The website is: www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov.

Website

Featured Medal:

Prisoner of War Medal

The Prisoner of War Medal is a military award of the United States armed forces which was authorized by Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on 8 November 1985. The United States Code citation for the POW Medal statute is 10 U.S.C. § 1128.

The Prisoner of War Medal may be awarded to any person who was a prisoner of war after April 5, 1917 (the date of the United States' entry into World War I was April 6). It is awarded to any person who was taken prisoner or held captive while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing Armed Force; or while serving with friendly forces engaged in armed conflict against an opposing Armed Force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. As of an amendment to Title 10 of the United States Code in 2013, the medal is also awarded for captivity under circumstances "which the Secretary concerned finds were comparable to those circumstances under which persons have generally been held captive by enemy armed forces during periods of armed conflict. "The person's conduct, while in captivity, must have been honorable. This medal may be awarded posthumously to the surviving next of kin of the recipient.

No more than one Prisoner of War Medal may be awarded. For any subsequent award of the medal, service stars will be awarded and worn on the suspension and service ribbon of the medal.



Picture of the Medal and Ribbon.



Vegetable Pasta Salad:

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat pasta, uncooked
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon dried parsley
- 3 cups fresh vegetables, washed and chopped*

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions.
3. In a small saucepan, make dressing by combining vinegar, water, sugar, vegetable oil, salt, pepper, garlic powder, dill weed, and dried parsley. Bring to a boil then remove from heat and cool.
4. In a large bowl, combine pasta and vegetables.
5. Pour cooled dressing mixture over pasta and vegetables. Stir well.
6. Refrigerate 3 to 4 hours before serving.

Notes:

*Any of these vegetables will work great: carrots, celery, broccoli, green pepper, cucumber, onion, and many more!



Coming in the Next Issue...

Survivor
Benefits,
Auto Allowance
and Clothing
Allowance.