



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

July/August 2021



Lexington, SC.

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At a Glance Calendar July/August

Weekly on Tuesdays in July	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon See page 11 for more information
Sunday, July 4th	Independence Day
Monday, July 5th	County Offices Closed
Tuesday, July 27th	County Council Meeting
Weekly on Tuesdays in August	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon See page 11 for more information
Thursday, August 12th	Gaston Outreach
Friday, August 13th	Chapin Outreach
Friday, August 20th	Batesburg/Leesville Outreach
Tuesday, August 24th	County Council Meeting

CALENDAR KEY

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

We are once again open for business in person and accepting walk ins and in person appointments. It has been a long fourteen months working by phone, fax, email and US mail, but we continued to be available every single workday during this entire period. We are honored to serve you and look forward to seeing old friends we have helped many times and new friends we have not met yet. If you need assistance with VA related questions or claims, please call us.

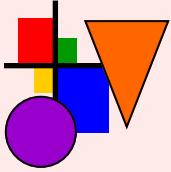
As we celebrate our 245th Independence Day as a Nation, let us be mindful that our independence came with a price. Many died for us to have the freedom we have today and many presently serve on active duty on the frontlines to continue our freedom. How will you celebrate Independence Day? Many head to the beach or the mountains, while many travel to Europe or Asia for a special vacation. I encourage you to visit a VA National Cemetery and pay respects to those who lie in honored rest.

School starts back in August and hopefully, the corona virus will be behind us. It has been challenging but America has risen to the challenge. It will be nice to sit and cheer our team in a high school football stadium once again or attend a soccer game listening to parents cheer on their children and encouraging them to kick the ball.

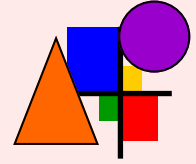
Have a great summer!
Enjoying the journey,



A powerful country
made a strong history
with its courage and determination.
Wishing you great joy
on this sparkling day!
Happy Fourth of July!!!



AGENT ORANGE



Agent Orange was a tactical herbicide the U.S. military used to clear leaves and vegetation for military operations mainly during the Vietnam War. Agent Orange was the most widely used of the herbicide combinations sprayed. Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam were tested or stored elsewhere, including some military bases in the United States.

When & where Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam:

The U.S. military herbicide program in South Vietnam took place between 1962 and 1975. Herbicides were sprayed in all four military zones of Vietnam. More than 19 million gallons of various herbicide combinations were used. Agent Orange was the combination the U.S. military used most often.

Heavily sprayed areas included:

- Inland forest near the demarcation zone
- Inland forests at the junction of the borders of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam
- Inland forests north and northwest of Saigon
- Mangrove forests on the southernmost peninsula of Vietnam
- Mangrove forests along major shipping channels southeast of Saigon

The VA bases eligibility for VA disability compensation benefits, in part, on whether you served in a location that exposed you to Agent Orange. We call this having a presumption of exposure. You have a presumption of exposure if you meet at least one of the service requirements listed below.

Between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, you must have served for any length of time in at least one of these locations:

- In the Republic of Vietnam, or
- Aboard a U.S. military vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, or
- On a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia. These are considered Blue Water Navy Veterans. If the VA denied your claim in the past, you can file a new claim based on Public Law 116-23, or
- On regular perimeter duty on the fenced-in perimeters of a U.S. Army installation in Thailand or a Royal Thai Air Force base. These bases include U-Tapao, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Udorn, Takhli, Korat, or Don Muang.

Or at least one of these must be true. You:

- Served in or near the Korean DMZ for any length of time between September 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, or
- Served on active duty in a regular Air Force unit location where a C-123 aircraft with traces of Agent Orange was assigned, and had repeated contact with this aircraft due to your flight, ground, or medical duties, or
- Were involved in transporting, testing, storing, or other uses of Agent Orange during your military service, or
- Were assigned as a Reservist to certain flight, ground, or medical crew duties at one of the below locations.

Eligible Reserve locations, time periods, and units include:

- Lockbourne/Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Ohio, 1969 to 1986 (906th and 907th Tactical Air Groups or 355th and 356th Tactical Airlift Squadrons)
- Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts, 1972 to 1982 (731st Tactical Air Squadron and 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, or 901st Organizational Maintenance Squadron)
- Pittsburgh International Airport in Pennsylvania, 1972 to 1982 (758th Airlift Squadron)



Continued on page 4

Agent Orange continued from page 3

Veterans must show that they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service to be eligible for service-connection for presumptive diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. For diseases that are not presumptive, they must show that they were exposed to herbicides and that there is an actual connection between the disease and their herbicide exposure. When sound medical and scientific evidence shows that an illness is caused by Agent Orange exposure, we add it to our list of presumptive diseases. If you've been diagnosed with one of these illnesses, you don't need to prove that it started during—or got worse because of—your military service.



List of Presumptive Diseases:

- * [AL Amyloidosis](#) - A rare illness that happens when an abnormal protein (called amyloid) enters the body's tissues or organs. These include the organs like the heart, kidneys, or liver.
- * [Chloracne \(or Similar Acneform Disease\)](#) - A skin condition that happens soon after exposure to chemicals. It looks like common forms of acne often seen in teenagers. Under our rating regulations, this condition must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of herbicide exposure.
- * [Chronic B-cell Leukemia's](#) - A type of cancer that affects white blood cells. These are cells in the body's immune system that help to fight off illnesses and infections.
- * [Diabetes Mellitus \(Type 2\)](#) - An illness that happens when the body can't respond to the hormone insulin the way it should. This leads to high blood sugar levels.
- * [Hodgkin's Disease](#) - A type of malignant lymphoma (cancer) that causes the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen to grow progressively larger. It also causes red blood cells to decrease more and more over time (called anemia).
- * [Ischemic Heart Disease](#) - A type of heart disease that happens when the heart doesn't get enough blood. This leads to chest pain.
- * [Multiple Myeloma](#) - A type of cancer that affects the plasma cells. These are a type of white blood cells made in the bone marrow that help to fight infection.
- * [Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma](#) - A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue. These are parts of the immune system that help to fight infection and illness.
- * [Parkinson's Disease](#) - A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement—and often worsens over time. The nervous system is the network of nerves and fibers that send messages between the brain and spinal cord and other areas of the body.
- * [Peripheral Neuropathy \(early onset\)](#) - An illness of the nervous system that causes numbness, tingling, and motor (or muscle) weakness. Under our rating regulations, this condition must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of herbicide exposure.
- * [Porphyria Cutanea Tarda](#) - A rare illness that can make the liver stop working the way it should. It can also cause the skin to thin and blister when exposed to the sun. Under our rating regulations, this condition must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of herbicide exposure.
- * [Prostate Cancer](#) - Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men.
- * [Respiratory Cancers](#) - Cancers of the organs involved in breathing. These include cancers of the lungs, larynx, trachea, and bronchus.
- * [Soft Tissue Sarcoma](#) - A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues. We don't include osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma on our list of presumptive diseases.

Three additional conditions are being added to the presumptive list per the 2021 National Defense Bill. These three conditions are:

- * [Hypothyroidism](#) - A condition in which your thyroid gland doesn't produce enough of certain crucial hormones.
- * [Bladder Cancer](#) - Common type of cancer that begins in the cells of the bladder.
- * [Parkinsonism \(Parkinson like symptoms\)](#) - A general term that refers to a group of neurological disorders that cause movement problems similar to those seen in Parkinson's disease such as tremors, slow movement and stiffness.

These conditions haven't been added to the presumptive list yet, but the Department of Veterans Affairs is already making decisions on these conditions.

Continued on page 5

Agent Orange continued from page 4

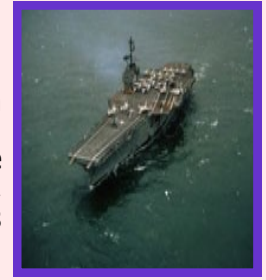
Agent Orange Registry Health Exam for Veterans:

VA's Agent Orange Registry Health Exam alerts Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to Agent Orange exposure during their military service. The registry data helps the VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively. This comprehensive health exam includes an exposure and medical history, laboratory tests, and a physical exam. A VA health professional will discuss the results face-to-face with the Veteran and in a follow-up letter.

Important points about registry health exams:

- * Free to eligible Veterans and no co-payment.
- * Not a disability compensation exam or required for other VA benefits.
- * Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary.
- * Based on Veterans' recollection of service, not on their military records.
- * Will not confirm exposure to Agent Orange.
- * Veterans can receive additional registry exams, if new problems develop.

To contact the VA about Agent Orange Registry Health Exams: Call your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator at Dorn VAMC: 803-776-4000 ext. 6179; TDD (for hearing impaired): 1-800-829-4833; or go to your nearest VA health care facility and speak to the VA Environmental Health Coordinator.



July is National Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month!



August is National Immunization Awareness 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 *Robert Singleton, Ginger Graham, Mike Gordon, & David Kerr*. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of May & June.



THANKS

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of July & August?



July 3, 1863 - The Battle of Gettysburg ends.



July 4, 1882 - The "Last Great Buffalo Hunt" began on Indian reservation lands in North Dakota as 2,000 Teton Sioux Indians in full hunting regalia killed about 5,000 buffalo.

July 10, 1943 - The Allied invasion of Italy began with an attack on the island of Sicily.

July 11, 1817 - American philosopher Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts.



July 16, 1945 - The experimental Atomic bomb, "Fat Boy", was set off at 5:30 a.m. in the desert of New Mexico, creating a mushroom cloud rising 41,000 feet.

July 21, 1899 - Ernest Hemingway was born in Oak Park, Illinois.

July 27, 1953 - The Korean War ended with the signing of an armistice. The war had lasted just over three years.



July 28, 1943 - During World War II, a firestorm killed 42,000 civilians in Hamburg, Germany. The firestorm occurred after 2,326 tons of bombs and incendiaries were dropped by the Allies.

July 31, 1790 - The U.S. Patent Office first opened its doors.

August 2, 1776 - Most of the 55 members of the Continental Congress signed the parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence.

August 4, 1901 - Jazz trumpet player Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans, Louisiana.

August 9, 1974 - At noon, Richard M. Nixon resigned the presidency as a result of the Watergate scandal.

August 13, 1961 - The Berlin Wall came into existence after the East German government closed the border between the east and west sectors of Berlin with barbed wire to discourage emigration to the West.

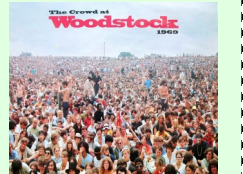
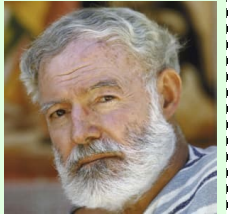
August 15, 1969 - Woodstock began in a field near Yasgur's Farm at Bethel, New York.

August 17, 1786 - American frontiersman Davy Crockett was born in Hawkins County, Tennessee.

August 21, 1959 - Hawaii was admitted to the Union as the 50th state.

August 28, 1963 - The March on Washington occurred as over 250,000 people attended a Civil Rights rally in Washington, D.C., at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made his now-famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

August 31, 1997 - Britain's Princess Diana died at age 36 from massive internal injuries suffered in a high-speed car crash, reportedly after being pursued by photographers.



PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE MEANING

What does the Pledge of Allegiance mean? Let's break it down and have a look.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America"

The definition of "pledge" is: commit (a person or organization) by a solemn promise. The definition of "allegiance" is: loyalty or commitment...of an individual to a group or cause. The American flag represents many things. The stripes represent the original 13 Colonies and the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well; red symbolizes hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice. So basically this line states that we loyally commit ourselves (aka promise) to our country as a whole (as represented by the flag).

"And to the republic for which it stands"

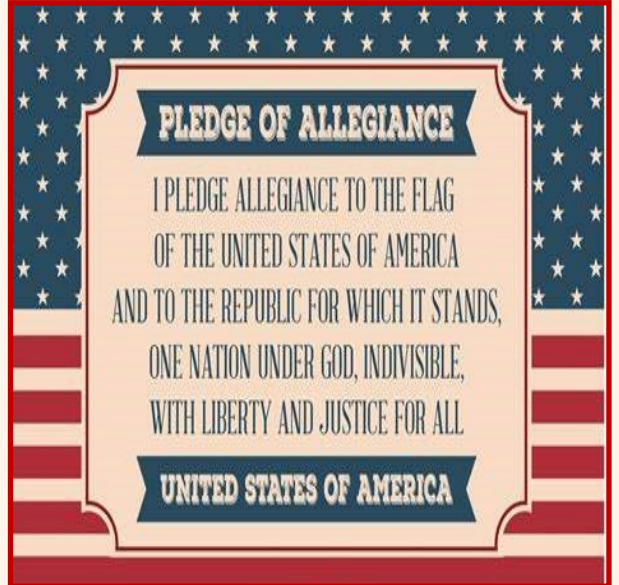
The definition of "republic" is: a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch. This line is saying we also loyally commit or promise ourselves to having the power held by the people, and the people represented by an elected official. It is saying this is something the flag represents also.

"One Nation, Under God"

The definition of "nation" is: a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory. "Under God" means being under the care of God. This could be whatever God you choose to believe in, but it is basically saying we're united under the care of that (or all?) God. Of course, this is the line with all the controversy. Perhaps I'm over simplifying the matter, but I just don't think this line was put in there to be exclusive. Instead, I think it is meant to be inclusive and offer assurance. If you believe in a traditional Christian God, this is easy to understand. This could also be a god by any other name, and for any other religion. Or, if you believe in the god of trashy fiction novels, or the god of fishing, he/she's watching out for us too. This line is about unity. It is saying we're all united (together) in one place (America), and under the care and assurance of God.

"Indivisible, with liberty and justice for all"

"Indivisible" is defined as: unable to be divided or separated. "Liberty" is defined as: the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior, or political views. The definition of "justice" is: just behavior or treatment. I think it's silly that the definition has the word "just" in it, which is part of the word we're trying to define. So I'll include that a synonym for "justice" is "fairness". This line means that we cannot be divided, we will be free of restrictions, and everyone will be treated fairly.



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.



TRICARE



TRICARE is the Department of Defense's premier health care program serving 9.4 million active duty service members, retired service members, National Guard and Reserve members, family members and survivors worldwide. As a TRICARE beneficiary, you have access to the health care you need wherever you are.

TRICARE brings together military hospitals and clinics with a network of civilian providers to offer you medical, pharmacy and dental options that meet your changing needs.

TRICARE is the worldwide health care program for uniformed service members and their eligible family members. (Uniformed service members includes active duty and retired members of the: U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service and the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.) Depending on your eligibility, you can choose among TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select, TRICARE for Life (TFL) or certain optional premium-based plans. Most TRICARE medical program options include comprehensive health care coverage and a pharmacy benefit.

Registering and maintaining up-to-date information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is essential for determining TRICARE eligibility. Only sponsors (or a sponsor-appointed individual with a valid power of attorney) can add family members to DEERS. Family members age 18 and older may update their own contact information in DEERS. Visit www.tricare.mil/deers for more information.

Your TRICARE benefit is the same regardless of where you are, but there are different customer service contacts for whether you are stateside or overseas. Each region is managed by a contractor who partners with the Military Health System to provide you with health, medical and administrative support including customer service, claims processing and prior authorizations for certain health care services. Your regional and overseas contractors are your main resource for TRICARE benefit information and assistance.

For more information on TRICARE go to www.tricare.mil

Updates from the VARO and VAMC

- * The VA regional office is now open from 8 to 4 Monday - Friday for appointments in person.
- * Field examiners are now out and about but are still doing video or phone appointments for fiduciaries to be assigned.
- * Vocational Rehab is now doing walk in appointments Monday - Friday from 8 am to 4:30pm.

"So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and



every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring."

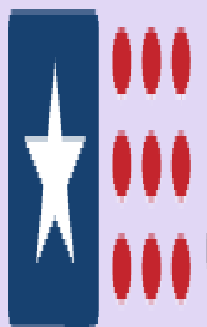
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

VA plans expansion of benefits for disability claims for conditions related to Agent Orange exposures

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today a major decision related to presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange. The VA will begin implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), adding three conditions to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to herbicide agents, more commonly known as Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

"Many of our Nation's Veterans have waited a long time for these benefits," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "The VA will not make them wait any longer. This is absolutely the right thing to do for Veterans and their families."

The VA will apply the provisions of court orders related to *Nehmer vs. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, which may result in an earlier date for entitlement to benefits for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors, who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions, will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. The VA will send letters to impacted Veterans and survivors.



Veterans
Crisis Line

**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.

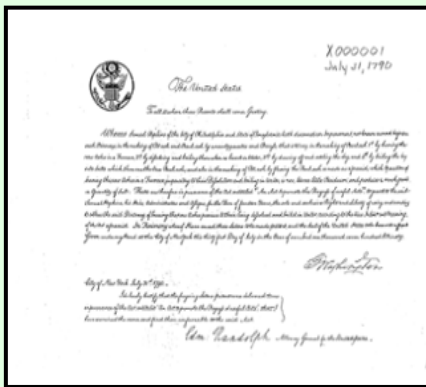
The History of the United States Patent Office

Simply described, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is an agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce that issues patents to inventors and businesses for their inventions, and trademark registration for product and intellectual property identification. The USPTO's budget is rather uncommon among federal agencies because it operates solely on fees collected by its users, and not on taxpayer dollars.

The history of the USPTO is quite engaging with significant events occurring over the course of more than two centuries. These events include considerable evolution and hotly contested regulation governing the rights to protection of intellectual property while offering innovations by some of history's most creative thinkers. This rich legacy includes inventions that have materially impacted our environment, our lifestyles and even our lifespans, while also generating tremendous debate about their underlying value and the motivations of patent owners. In some cases, patents have been branded "patently absurd" by observers of the patent system. There have been many patent grants throughout history for which patent rights should never have been granted, yet these have managed to find a way through the process. There are others that have been persistently rejected despite being both novel and non-obvious as viewed by many experts outside the patent office. Regardless, this series endeavors to provide just a thumbnail sketch of the lengthy history of the Patent Office, highlighting some of the many interesting events that have unfolded under the watchful eyes of the ever-changing USPTO leadership.

The United States Patent Office was created with the Patent Act of 1790. That Act was founded on these words, found in Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution: "Congress shall have the power...to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." Thomas Jefferson, commenting on his softening opposition to patents at the time, stated: "The patent act has given a spring to invention beyond my comprehension."

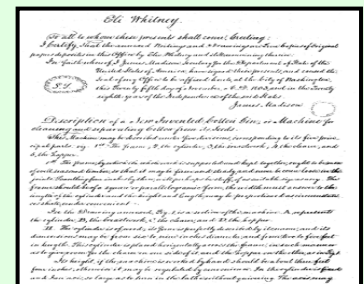
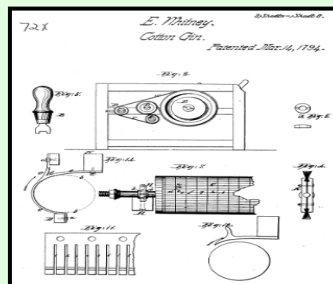
In 1790, Secretary of War Henry Knox, Attorney General Edmund Randolph, and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson headed a three-member Patent Commission, overseeing a requirement for submission by the inventor that a working model (no larger than 12" x 12") of each invention be produced in miniature to be submitted with each application. This requirement was purported to be necessary due to a lack of effective writing skills among many of the applicants of the time, with the models serving to provide clarity as to the nature and purpose of the intended invention. Some 200,000 models in total were generated during the 90 year period from 1790 through 1880. These models were stored for many years, with most surviving two substantial patent office fires until the requirement was abolished in 1880. In 1925, the models were eventually sold off, and went through a number of ownership changes. The largest surviving portion of this collection (approx. 4,000 models) is currently the property of the Rothschild Patent Museum, in Cazenovia, New York.



On July 31, 1790, the first U.S. patent was issued to Samuel Hopkins for an improvement "in the making of Pot ash and Pearl ash by a new Apparatus and Process." This patent was signed by then-President George Washington.

Note that this patent image is annotated with the number "X"00000--1, the result of an adjustment to the patent numbering system to recognize the loss of the first 10,280 patents in a fire in 1836. The patent commission at the time reconstructed the collection from the only copies available, those held by the inventors. Fewer than 3,000 of those patents have been recovered and re-issued with numbers that now include the "X" designation. Prior to this fire, patents were not numbered. In 1836, the patent commission began numbering patents beginning with 0000001.

An interesting "X" patent is Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin, number X000072:



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. They are currently meeting at the American Legion Post 7, 211 American Legion Drive, Lexington, SC 29072. 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.

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, 10 am to 12 noon,
at Crossroads Counseling Center,
130A Whiteford Way, Lexington, SC 29072***

The Meaning of the Folding of the American Flag



Here is how to understand the flag that laid upon the coffin and is surrendered to so many widows and widowers: Do you know that at military funerals, the 21-gun salute stands for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776? Have you ever noticed that the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the United States of America Flag 13 times? You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

The 1st fold of the flag is a symbol of life. The 2nd fold is a symbol of the belief in eternal life. The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the Veterans departing the ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of the country to attain peace throughout the world. The 4th fold represents the weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance. The 5th fold is a tribute to the 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 6th fold is for where people's hearts lie. It is with their heart that they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all. The 7th fold is a tribute to its Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that they protect their country and their flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of their republic. The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day. The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded. The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of their country since they were first born. The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding them of their Nations motto, 'In God We Trust.'

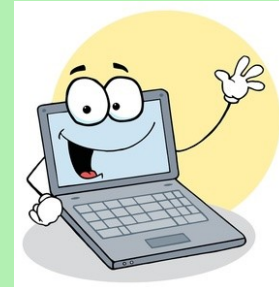
After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the Soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their Comrades and Shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for them the rights, privileges and freedoms they enjoy today.

There are some traditions and ways of doing things that have deep meaning. In the future, you'll see flags folded and now you will know why. Please share this with the children you love and all others who love what is referred to as the symbol of 'Liberty and Freedom.'



**All Lexington County Offices
will be closed
on the following days:**

**Monday, July 5th - County Offices closed
for July 4th Holiday**



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

The County of Lexington officials have reopened the County's Administration buildings to the general public and are continuing to monitor the impact that COVID-19 is having on the

Lexington County community and the services the County provides to its residents and visitors.

The VA office hours are from 8am to 5pm and we are open to the public. Counselors are available to assist with claims and questions via the telephone, email, fax US mail and in person. To meet with a counselor one on one, appointments are required. For further information or to get help from a counselor, please call our office at 803-785-8400 and we will be glad to assist you.



Batesburg/Leesville Outreach is the 3rd Friday of the month at the Batesburg-Leesville Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Chapin Outreach is the 2nd Friday of the month at the Chapin Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.



Gaston/Swansea Outreach is the 2nd 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.*

**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.**



Medical Expense Reports

For Veterans and Surviving Spouses not receiving the maximum Non-Service Connection Pension or Survivor Benefits, the VA may be able to pay you at a higher rate if you identify expenses the VA considers allowable. Medical and dental expenses paid by you may be deducted from the income the VA counts when determining your benefit entitlement. Any medical or dental expense that you paid for a member of your household (self, spouse, child, etc.) for which you were not reimbursed may also be counted. Expenses may be listed on a **VA Form 21P-8416, Medical Expense Report (MER)**, and submitted anytime for the previous year. For example: Medical Expense Reports for 2020 may be submitted anytime during the calendar year of 2021. Remember you only have until December 31, 2021 to submit 2020 reports.

Lexington County Enhances 9-1-1 Services and Emergency Notification With Smart911

Emergency Service Officials Encourage Residents to Sign Up For the Free Service That Provides Emergency Responders With More Information in the Event of an Emergency

Emergency Service officials in Lexington County have announced that Smart911 is now available to all individuals. Smart911 is a free service that allows individuals and families to sign up online to provide key information to County 9-1-1 call takers during an emergency.

“Smart911 saves critical time in an emergency and has proven to save lives nationwide,” said David Kerr, Director of Lexington County’s Department of Emergency Services, “The additional information provided in a Smart911 Safety Profile enables emergency responders to know exactly where they are going and who they are looking for when they arrive at the scene of the emergency, those details can help responders arrive more quickly and perform their duties more safely.”

Smart911 allows individuals to [create a Safety Profile](#) for their household at [www.smart911.com](#) or on the [Smart911 App](#) that includes any information they want 9-1-1 and response teams to have in the event of an emergency. When a citizen makes an emergency call, their Safety Profile is automatically displayed to the 9-1-1 call taker, allowing them to send the right response teams to the right location with the right information.

The Smart911 app provides greater access to the lifesaving benefits of Smart911 and targeted location-based alerts to all individuals. The Smart911 App is available on the Apple Store or Google Play.

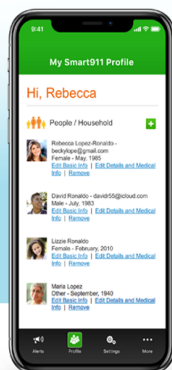
“Individuals who create a Safety Profile will be better prepared when traveling through towns and counties across the country that support Smart911,” said Director Kerr, “The Safety Profile travels with you and the additional information provides for the right response faster.”

With Smart911, individuals can link both homes and work addresses to mobile phones, which can be passed on to responders in the field for a more detailed, rapid response. Additional information including pets in the home, vehicle details in the event of an accident, and even emergency contacts can all be included in a Safety Profile. All information is optional, and the citizen has the ability to choose what details they would like to include.

“The benefits of this information on a 9-1-1 call from a cell phone are immeasurable”, said Director Kerr, “Mobile phones do not provide an address to the 9-1-1 call taker. These emergency situations are often the worst of a person's life, and the Safety Profile can speak for you when you might not be able to.”

Smart911 is currently available in 40 states and more than 1,500 municipalities across the country, and has been credited with positively impacting emergency outcomes including a missing child in which the girl’s photo and physical description were immediately available to 9-1-1 and responders, as well as a heart attack victim where an address and medical notes allowed responders to be dispatched to his location quickly.

**DOWNLOAD THE
SMART911® APP
TODAY**



Individuals are encouraged to create their Safety Profile with Smart911 today to have their information immediately available to 9-1-1 and to receive emergency notifications. Smart911 is private and secure, is only used for emergency responses, and only made available to the 9-1-1 system in the event of an emergency call.

Featured Medal:

Air Force Cross

The Air Force Cross is the second highest military award that can be given to a member of the United States Air Force. The Air Force Cross is the Air Force decoration equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross (Army), the Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps), and the Coast Guard Cross (Coast Guard). The Air Force Cross is awarded for extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of the Medal of Honor. It may be awarded to any individual who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S Air Force, distinguishes him or herself by extraordinary heroism in combat.

Originally entitled the "Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force)" the Air Force Cross was first proposed in 1947 after the creation of the United States Air Force as a separate armed service. The medal was designed by Eleanor Cox, an employee of the Air Force, and was sculpted by Thomas Hudson Jones of the Institute of Heraldry. The Air Force Cross was established by Congress in Public Law 88-593 on July 6, 1960, amending Section 8742 of Title 10, U.S. Code to change the designation of "Distinguished Service Cross" to "Air Force Cross" in case of awards made under Air Force Authority.

The Air Force Cross consists of a bronze cross with an oxidized satin finish. Centered on the obverse of the cross is a gold-plated American bald eagle, wings displayed against a cloud formation, (as used on the seal of the Air Force). This design is encircled by a laurel wreath in green enamel, edged in gold. The reverse of the cross is blank and suitable for engraving.

The service ribbon has a very wide center stripe of Brittany blue with narrow stripes of white and red at the edges. The ribbon is almost identical to that of the Distinguished Service Cross, except for the lighter blue center stripe, indicating the close connection of these awards.



July is
National
Grilling
Month!!!



August is
National
Picnic
Month!!!



CHANGES

There have been some changes to the office staff. Mary Kay Hatchell has left our office and has moved to the Voter Registration office. We wish her all the best!!!

We are currently in the process of finding a replacement for our administrative assistant and hope to have an update in the next newsletter.

Please be patient with the office if you call or come in as we no longer have someone continuously up front when someone comes in or to answer the phones.

Coming in the Next Issue...
Compensation, SMC, & Clothing Allowances