



**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE  
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**

**GARY R. BAKER**  
DIRECTOR  
**JEAN FRICK**  
ASST. CSO

TELEPHONE: (803) 359-8400  
FAX: (803) 808-2105

605 WEST MAIN STREET  
SUITE 101  
LEXINGTON, S.C.29072

# VET NEWS

JULY 2004

## SEPTEMBER 12 RALLY

A number of local organizations are working on a rally to recognize our troops and to remember the almost 3,000 people who died on September 11, 2001.



The rally will be held at the Lexington 1 District Stadium at 3:00 pm. on Sunday, September 12. In case of inclement weather, the rally will be moved to the gymnasium at White Knoll High School.

Any group which wants to participate should notify the VA Office prior to August 13<sup>th</sup>. Marching units, bands, military equipment or memorabilia displays, patriotic organizations, recruiting information, etc.. will be welcomed. Each group will be responsible for its own display table; no electrical service will be available.

ROTC units from the county high schools will be participating as will veterans and Blue Star and Gold Star Mothers.

Bring out your colors and show our troops and the families of the 9-1-1 disaster that we still care and we remember them and their sacrifices.

Organizations or individuals desiring to participate in the planning are invited to attend the next meeting of the planning committee on Thursday, July 15 at 5:30 pm in the VA Office.

## IRAQI FREEDOM TROOP NEEDS

Our deployed troops have been asking for supplies of Avon Skin-So-Soft Bug Guard Plus, a sunscreen spray to deal with the sun and insect repellent.

Troops are also asking for goody packages to include books, cookies, CDs, DVDs, and nonperishable snacks.

Drop any donations of goodies by the VA Office. The organizations shipping the goody packages can also use cash donations to defray shipping expenses.

## SEARCHING FOR GOLD STAR MOTHERS

The Blue Star Mothers plan to recognize the Gold Star Mothers from Lexington County at the September 12 rally. Gold Star Mothers are the mothers of sons and daughters who served and died in the line of duty in the Armed Forces or died as a result of injuries sustained in such service during one of the war periods.



The VA Office has compiled the attached listing of military personnel who died in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War.

Any Gold Star Mother or member of the immediate family of a man or woman who died in wartime service will be recognized at the September 12 rally. Contact the VA Office prior to August 10 so the Gold Star Mothers and family members can be properly recognized on September 12.

## AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Military veterans were awarded various awards and decorations for various service qualifications to include heroism, wounds, service in particular areas, or for meritorious service.

Those awards and decorations are usually reflected on a veteran's DD214 (discharge paper), however, there are circumstances in which those awards might not be recorded there.



In 1947, Army regulations provided for the award of the Bronze Star Medal to any infantry soldier from WWII who had been awarded the Combat Infantry Badge or Combat Medic Badge. Many WWII veterans never received the Bronze Star Medal because they were already discharged when the retroactive award went into effect.

Similarly, veterans of the Korean War were authorized the Korean War Service Medal in 1954 but the medal was not authorized for award until 2000. A Korean Service Medal has also been authorized for veterans who served in Korea after the Armistice of 1953.

Any veteran who has not actually received the awards and decorations for which they are authorized may obtain, on a one-time basis, award or replacement.

Contact the VA Office to see what awards or decorations you might be entitled to receive.

## RECORDING OF DD214 (DISCHARGE PAPER)

A veterans discharge paper (now referred to as the DD214) is one of the important elements in applying for benefits from the VA. A copy is necessary to initiate a claim, obtain medical care, or receive burial benefits.

A copy is also required when applying for Social Security benefits.

Many times, veterans file their discharge papers away and they get lost in family moves, divorces, deaths, fires, etc.

A safe, reliable mechanism for insuring that the discharge is not lost is to bring the original in to the VA Office to be recorded. A copy will be maintained by this office and certified copies can be made for the veteran.

If the original discharge paper (DD214) is not available, a copy can generally be obtained from the veteran's military service records. Those older discharges are available from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO.

Obtaining the discharge from St. Louis takes several months which can delay the processing of any benefits.

We recommend that each veteran contact the VA Office to see if their discharge is already recorded. If not, paperwork can be completed to receive a copy from the veteran's military service records.

## WORLD WAR II PROGRAM

Dorn VA Medical Center will conduct a program to recognize and honor the World War II veterans and their families on Friday, August 20 at 1:00 pm.

The program will be held in the Elisabeth S. Poat Auditorium, Building 5. The keynote speaker will be mentioned in our next newsletter.

Refreshments will be served following the program.



## WORLD WAR II VETERANS HONORED

A number of World War II veterans were honored at ceremonies around the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Lexington Post 7, Gilbert Post 142, and Chapin Post 193 of the American Legion presented colorful certificates to veterans attending programs Memorial Day weekend. VFW Post 8738 presented colorful certificates to WWII veterans attending a May 29 event.

A number of veterans and family members traveled to Washington, DC for the dedication of the World War II monument. Other veterans ventured to France to attend 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary programs commemorating the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944.

## VA SOFTWARE

The Veterans Affairs Office has been connected to the Veterans Administration database through the internet. This will allow the office to easily and quickly check on the status of a claim or payment.

The VA office must have the power of attorney for the veteran before we can check the status of any claim or payment.



## RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD BENEFITS

Reservists and National Guard members activated for the Iraqi War are entitled to VA benefits. Just one day of active duty for other than training qualifies Reservists and National Guard members for the full range of VA benefits to include medical care, service-connected and pension claims, as well as burial benefits.

In addition, those Reservists and National Guard are entitled to Tricare health care coverage and full commissary privileges.

## RESEARCH SOFTWARE

The VA Office has recently obtained a CD that contains information on all helicopters used in Vietnam. This research tool contains information about accidents or hostile activities which might have damaged or destroyed a helicopter.

The software, distributed by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, enables a researcher to determine casualties or read incident reports. More than 11,000 helicopters were utilized in Vietnam

In two recent cases involving PTSD claims, the software was able to pinpoint exact dates and names of participants in helicopter crashes.

The VA Office staff is able to utilize the tools of this software and internet capabilities to conduct research for the purpose of assisting veterans as they identify stressors for their PTSD claims.

Internet sources enable the VA Office staff to search for unit rosters and reports, ship crew lists, and correspond with veterans to obtain verification

data for PTSD or medical claims as well as to prove citations and awards.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### July

- 10- Ice Cream Social, (VVA), Dorn VA, 1:45
- 13- Outreach- Chapin, 8-12
- 15- Planning Meeting, September 12 Rally, 5:30
- 17- Veterans Formation
- 20- Outreach- Swansea, 8-12

### August

- 3- Outreach- Batesburg-Leesville, 8-12
- 10- Outreach- Chapin, 8-12
- 17- Outreach- Swansea, 8-12
- 20- World War II Program, Dorn VA, 1:00

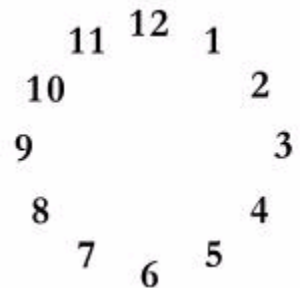
### September

- 7- Outreach- Baestburg-Leesville, 8-12
- 11- Rally, Lexington District Stadium, 3:00
- 14- Outreach- Chapin, 8-12
- 21- Outreach- Swansea, 8-12

## VA OFFICE HOURS

The VA Office is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except for State holidays.

Veterans are urged to call ahead to arrange an appointment.



## VETERANS VIDEOTAPING

Any veteran who would like to volunteer to have their recollections of their military service videotaped should contact the VA Office. Videotapes will be edited, combined with still photos and graphics. Copies will be provided to the veteran, library, and Library of Congress.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### July

- 1- Women's Army Corps founded (1943)
- 1- Air Force Nurse Corps founded (1949)
- 4- Declaration of Independence signed (1776)
- 27- Korean War Armistice (1953)
- 30- Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES) founded (1943)