

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY**



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VET NEWS

August 2006

STOLEN VA LAPTOP RECOVERED

Friday, June 30, 2006: Social Security numbers and other personal data on 26.5 million veterans and military troops were not copied from a Veterans Affairs computer missing for eight weeks.

The recovery of the laptop and external drive was a "positive note in this very sad saga," VA Secretary Jim Nicholson said.

The FBI said a preliminary review by its computer forensic teams "has determined that the database remains intact and has not been accessed since it was stolen."

Veterans are urged to keep watch over their financial records until more tests are completed in the coming days.

MILITARY & VETERAN SEARCH, MILITARY RECORD INFORMATION, BULLETIN BOARDS, REUNION INFORMATION AND MUCH MORE!

Vet Friends.com helps you to reunite with friends and family who are veterans of or are currently serving in the US Army, USN, USAF, USMC and USCG! Learn how to obtain your or your family members' Military Records from the U.S. Government. Over 150,000 people visit VetFriends every month at www.VetFriends.com



Volunteer drivers are still needed to transport disabled veterans to and from the Dorn VA Medical Center. If

you are interested, come by the Veterans Affairs Office and pick up an application. All applicants must pass a physical and take a TB test at the Dorn VA Medical Center to become a certified driver. Call Gary Baker at 785-8401 for more information.

REQUIREMENTS FOR VAN/POV DRIVERS

Need copy of current DRIVER'S LICENSE

Need copy of current AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Must view DRIVER SAFETY VIDEO
If you are a DAV Van and/or POV Driver**

**Must sign SC Dept. of Public Safety Request
for Drivers Information—Form MV-20**

Must have a VAN DRIVER'S PHYSICAL EXAM

**Must complete Van Drivers' Questionnaire
VA Form May 1991-10-0043A**

Must complete a DAV VAVS Form 20



The Lexington County Transportation Van for Disabled Veterans is now in service. Please try to schedule your appointments Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 9:00 am. and 12:00 p.m. Please call 3-4 days in advance at 803-785-8400 to arrange for a ride to and from the VA Medical Center. Please have your address, phone number, and the last four digits of your Social Security Number when you call.

FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Have you written your will yet? Are you considering signing a lease? Do you need a power of attorney or notarized signature? If so then you need legal assistance, and best of all, military legal assistance is absolutely free!

You are eligible for free legal assistance if you are:

- ❖ On active duty
- ❖ A military Retiree
- ❖ Immediate Family/Survivor of Either
- ❖ Guard and Reserve (limited servicemembers have limited access to free legal assistance; contact your legal assistance office for further information).

Military legal assistance offices are located on almost every base, ship and installation. If you need legal assistance you can call or drop in to your local Legal Assistance Office. Visit the [Legal Assistance Office Locator](#) to find the office nearest you.

Military Lawyers, aka Judge advocates (JAGs), can offer help in legal and non-legal matters ranging from purchasing a car to renting an apartment, buying a home, paying taxes or writing a will. A "judge advocate" is an attorney who has graduated from an accredited law school and is licensed to practice law by the highest court of a state or by a federal court. Judge advocates assigned to assist individuals with personal legal problems are known as legal assistance attorneys.

If a legal assistance attorney is unable to resolve the case or a specialized attorney is needed, the legal assistance attorney will refer you to a civilian attorney, through a local lawyer referral service, who can handle the case.

VETERANS AND TYPE II DIABETES

The department of Veterans Affairs calls diabetes mellitus "a serious, national problem that has reached epidemic proportions." In fact, veterans with diabetes account for about 15 percent of the total cared for by VA.

The American Diabetes Association categorizes Type II diabetes as the most common form of the disease in the United States. It can be detected by blood tests that indicate when the body is not producing enough insulin, a vital ingredient in the complicated chemistry of blood cell production. Medical specialists working with patients who have this disease say it can be inherited or, more often than not, be brought on by poor diet choices and eating too much, which eventually results in obesity.

Between 1965 and 1971, in a project called Operation Ranch Hand, the U.S. Air Force sprayed more than 17 million

gallons of the defoliant and other herbicides while flying missions in Vietnam.

The idea was to systematically deplete the green cover used by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, including bushes, tall grass and other natural hiding places. In a report issued by the National Academy of Sciences, "evidence suggests a link between Type II diabetes and the aerial spraying of foliage in Vietnam, including Agent Orange." And, it wasn't just any ordinary defoliant.

In this case, there was concern that Dioxin, the key chemical ingredient in Agent Orange, may have produced delayed diabetes outbreaks among veterans who had been handling the powerful defoliant, or who were anywhere in the vicinity when it was being sprayed from low-flying, propeller-driven planes.

Nobody knows for sure just how many veterans in the United States and abroad are diabetics, but VA estimates that more than 500,000 of them, now receiving health care services, have the disease. Many more may have slipped through the statistical cracks. According to the AMVETS Diabetes Institute, an estimated 15 percent of all patients admitted to the various VA medical centers have diabetes, making it a major healthcare problem.

Diabetes has become the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults ages 20 to 74, as well as of end-stage renal (kidney) disease, accounting for 43 percent of new cases. Some 70 percent of diabetics suffer various stages of nervous system damage, including lack of pain sensation in the feet and hands. They may also face a serious problem involving overly slow digestion of food. More than 60 percent of non-traumatic limb amputations across the country occur among people with diabetes. (*American Veteran*, Spring 2006)

Diabetes Resources

Veterans with Diabetes International. Website: <http://ttibbsav.com/wvi/html>. Helpful tips and resources. No charge for membership.

National Diabetes International Clearinghouse (1-800-860-8747). Website: diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/.

Vietnam Veterans of America. Website: www.vva.org/benefits/vvgagent.htm#Diseases. Guide on Agent Orange Diseases.

Department of Veterans Affairs. Website: <http://www.va.gov/orange>. Additional information on how VA is handling Agent Orange claims.

National Academy of Sciences. Website: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9982.html>. Report on Agent Orange and diabetes.

WHY THE AMERICAN FLAG IS FOLDED 13 TIMES (Author Unknown)

Have you ever wondered why the flag of the United States of America is folded 13 times when it is lowered or when it is folded and handed to the widow at the burial of a veteran? Here is the meaning of each of those folds and what it means to you.

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

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

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

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

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

The 'sixth fold' is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

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

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

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

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

The 'eleventh fold', in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen represents the lower portion of the seal of

King David and King Solomon, and glorifies in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust".

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

The next time you see a flag ceremony honoring someone that has served our country, either in the Armed Forces or in our civilian services such as the Police Force or Fire Department, keep in mind all the important reasons behind each and every movement. They have paid the ultimate sacrifice for all of us by honoring our flag and our Country.



"This flag, which we honor and under which we serve, is the emblem of our unity, our power, our thought and purpose as a nation. It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation."

Woodrow Wilson, 1917

If you were born abroad, are a U.S. citizen, and your birth certificate has not been reported or recorded in the United States, you cannot use it for Social Security or many other benefits in the United States. A Consular Report of Birth should have been prepared at an American consular office overseas while the child was under the age of 18. This document, referred to as the Consular Report of Birth or FS-240, is considered a basic United States citizenship document. An original FS-240 is furnished to the parent(s) at the time the registration is approved.

Usually, in order to establish citizenship under the appropriate provisions of U.S. law, the following documents must be submitted:

- 1) an official record of the child's foreign birth
- 2) evidence of the parent(s)' U.S. citizenship (e.g., a certified birth certificate, current U.S. passport, or Certificate of Naturalization or Citizenship);
- 3) evidence of the parents' marriage, if applicable; and
- 4) affidavits of parent(s)' residence and physical presence in the United States.

In certain cases, it may be necessary to submit additional documents, including affidavits of paternity and support, divorce decrees from prior marriages, or medical reports of blood compatibility. All evidentiary documents should be certified as true copies of the originals by the registrar of the office wherein each document was issued. A service fee of \$65 is prescribed under the provisions of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 22.1, item 9, for a Consular Report of Birth.

To amend or correct a Consular Report of Birth, submit a written request accompanied by certified copies of all documents appropriate for effecting the change (e.g., foreign birth certificate, marriage certificate, court ordered adoption or name change, birth certificates of the adopting or legitimating parents, affidavits, etc.). The original FS-240 or replacement FS-240, or a notarized affidavit concerning its whereabouts, also must be included.

The FS-240 can be obtained by writing to:
Vital Records Section
Passport Services
1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 510
Washington, D.C. 20522-1705

A **written** request must be notarized and must include a copy of valid photo identification of the requester. The written request must include:

- 1) full name of child at birth (plus any adoptive names
- 2) date and place of birth
- 3) names of parents
- 4) serial number, if known, of the FS-240
- 5) any available passport information
- 6) signature of requester and
- 7) notarized affidavit for a replacement FS-240 (if applicable)

Note: For Panama Canal Zone, just include items 1-3.

The fee for an FS-240 is \$30. The fee for PCZ certificates is \$30 for the first copy, \$20 each additional copy. Make check or bank draft drawn on a bank of the United States, or money order, payable to the "Department of State."

A person, who acquired United States citizenship through birth abroad to a U.S. citizen parent(s) or who acquired U.S. citizenship by derivative naturalization, may apply for a Certificate of Citizenship under the provisions of Section 341 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Application for this document may be made in the United States to the nearest office of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security. Upon approval, a Certificate of Citizenship will be issued in the name of the subject, but only if that person is in the United States. Obtaining this certificate involves presentation of basically the same documentation required to obtain a Consular Report of Birth. Under law, the Consular Report of Birth and the Certificate of Citizenship are equally acceptable as proof of citizenship.

The nearest office for South Carolina is:
The British Consulate General
Georgia Pacific Center
133 Peachtree Street, NE Suite 3400
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: (404) 954-7700

SEPTEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER	
Labor Day (office will be closed)	September 4
Patriot Day	September 11
POW/MIA Remembrance Day	September 15

**FISCAL YEAR 2007 VA BUDGET
(Budget Authority in Millions)**

Fiscal Year 2007-President's Budget Request	
Medical Services	\$24,716*
Medical Administration	\$ 3,177
Medical Facilities	\$ 3,589
Medical/Prosthetic Research	\$ 399
Subtotal, Veterans Health Admin.	\$ 31,861
Veterans Benefits Administration	\$ 1,168
General Administration	\$ 313
Subtotal, Gen. Operating Expenses	\$ 1,481
Construction, Major Projects	\$ 399
Construction, Minor Projects	\$ 198
Grants for State Extended Care Facilities	\$ 85
Grants for Construction of State Veterans Cemeteries	\$ 32
National Cemetery Administration	\$ 161
Total, Discretionary	\$ 35,697
*This figure does not include the President's proposed \$795 million in co-payment increases and user fees.	

Although the veterans budget has increased in recent years, there still is a significant gap in funding to meet the needs of sick and disabled veterans. The DAV is urging Congress to increase the overall VA medical care budget by 11 percent over the 2006 level, to \$32.8 billion. Included in that amount is a 13 percent boost for direct medical services to sick and disabled veterans and a 10 percent increase in funding medical and prosthetic research.

Other recommendations from the DAV include \$1.4 billion for the Veterans Benefit Administration to hire additional staff and to improve training and information technology within the Compensation and Pension Service. The DAV also calls for adding staff and program improvements with the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service.

Of critical concern to the DAV is the delivery of claims benefits. Despite its best efforts, the VA has been unable to completely conquer its quality and time-liness problems. The VA must be given sufficient resources to put in place serious reforms to solve its problems. It is a grave injustice to deny America's disabled veterans accurate and timely decisions on their claims for benefits.

The VA budget proposes \$795 million in savings by increasing fees placed on Priority 7 and 8 veterans. The suggested increases include a \$250 annual enrollment fee and more than doubling prescription co-pays, from \$7 to \$15.

For more information on recommended funding levels and public policy priorities for veterans programs and services, visit the DAV's website, www.dav.org, and click on "Legislation" at the top of the screen. You can also contact the National Legislative Department, National Service and Legislative Headquarters, 807

Maine Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20024. (DAV, *The Official Voice of the Disabled Veterans and DAV Auxiliary*, May/June 2006)

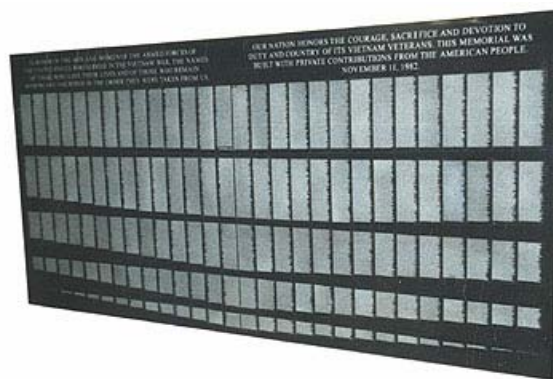
VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED

A traveling, ¾-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is coming to Columbia, SC on October 27, 28 & 29, 2006. Greenlawn Memorial Park & Funeral Home needs your help preparing for its arrival. Dedicated to Vietnam veterans and honoring all U.S. veterans, the **Dignity Memorial® Vietnam Wall Experience™** is 240 feet long, eight feet high and contains the names of more than 58,000 Americans who died or are missing in Vietnam. Honor their sacrifice by joining a committee and helping plan for the three-day exhibition.

All names etched on "The Wall" will be read throughout the three-day exhibition. Readings will take place in 20-minute intervals.

To volunteer call Tammy Chandler at (803) 776-1092.

The 58,196 names on this replica appear on the same panel and row as the names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. Each name is accurately and permanently engraved in cultured granite using the perfect cutting capability found in computer controlled laser technology. The panels on the replica have been rearranged in 5 rows of 28 panels to a row. This allows the design to be compact enough (5ft. x 11ft.) to be used as a wall mount display.



OFFICIAL NACVSO NOTICE

The Philadelphia Network Support Staff is seeing increasing reports of users receiving e-mail from the address abuse@vba.va.gov, asking them to check an account by clicking on a link.

This e-mail is a phishing scam, an attempt to gain personal information. The e-mail address abuse@vba.va.gov is fake and the link in the e-mail is to a web site in Asia.

Please notify all users of this phishing scam and instruct them to delete this e-mail if they receive it. DO NOT OPEN the e-mail.

VA GRAVESITE LOCATOR

The grave locations of more than three million veterans and dependents buried in national cemeteries can be found more easily now because the Department of Veterans Affairs has added maps of burial sections on-line that can be printed from home computers and at national cemetery kiosks. The latest improvement builds upon a service begun two years ago, in which a VA online feature permits family members to find the cemetery in which their loved one is buried. This new map feature makes it easier for families, friends and researchers to find the exact location of a veteran's grave in all national cemeteries and some state veterans cemeteries. The gravesite locator <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov> finds the cemeteries where veterans are buried. With the new online feature, people enter a veteran's name to search, click on the "Buried At" (burial location) link and a map of the national cemetery is displayed, showing the section where the grave is located. In a related development, VA recently added to its data-base the cemeteries in which 1.9 million veterans were buried with VA grave markers. These are mostly private cemeteries.

This addition brings the number of graves recorded in the locator to approximately five million. Those with maps are in VA national cemeteries and in state veterans cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery if burials were since 1999. Beyond the five million records now available, VA continues to add approximately 1,000 new records to the database each day. VA also

plans to add to its online data-base the exact locations of veterans' gravesites in the remaining state veterans' cemeteries. In the midst of the largest cemetery expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 123 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict from the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 16,000 acres of land.

Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable, their spouses, and eligible dependent children may be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits include a burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate, and a government headstone or marker regardless of where they are buried. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices at 1-800-827-1000. Anyone wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe to the VA Office of Public Affairs Distribution List at:

www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opa_listserv.asp.
[Source: VA Press Release, 2006]

MILITARY FACTS

24.4 million

The number of living military veterans in the United States.
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/amwars.asp>

1.4 million

The number of active duty military.
<http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf>

185,000+

The number of troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/amwars.asp>

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS ‘HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED’

The Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors. ‘Honoring Those Who Served’ is the title of the DOD program for providing dignified military funeral honors to veterans who have defended our nation.

Upon the family’s request, Public Law 106-65 requires that every eligible veteran receive a military funeral honors ceremony, to include folding and presenting the United States burial flag and the playing of Taps. The law defines a military funeral honors detail as consisting of two or more uniformed military persons, with at least one being a member of the veteran’s parent service of the armed forces. The DOD program calls for funeral home directors to request military funeral honors on behalf of the veteran’s family. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration cemetery staff can also assist with arranging military funeral honors at VA national cemeteries. Veterans organizations may assist in providing military funeral honors. When military funeral honors at a national cemetery are desired, they are arranged prior to the committal service by the funeral home.

The Department of Defense began the implementation plan for providing military funeral honors for eligible veterans as enacted in Section 578 of Public Law 106-65 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000 on January 1, 2000.

Questions or comments concerning the DOD military funeral honors program may be sent to the address listed below.

The military funeral honors

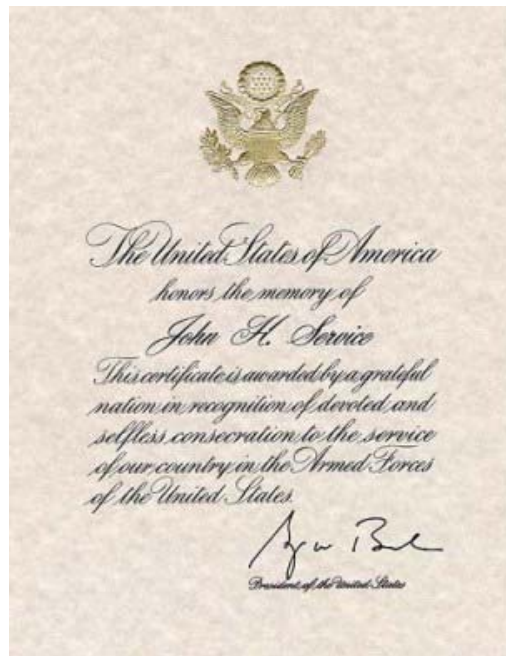
Web site is located at:

www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil.

Department of Defense
Directorate for Public Inquiry and Analysis
Room 3A750, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Military members on active duty or in the Selected Reserve.
- Former military members who served on active duty and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service in the Selected Reserve and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former military members discharged from the Selected Reserve due to a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.



A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is available to eligible recipients, or someone acting in their behalf. To apply for this certificate, contact your Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office. You must furnish a copy of the veteran’s honorable discharge and a copy of the death certificate.

PAVING THE WAY

The National Symposium for the Needs of Young Veterans will take place October 18-21, at Chicago's Hyatt Regency O'Hare. Country music stars Lee Greenwood and Darryl Worley have signed on to provide inspiration and entertainment.

Topics of discussion will include VA claims filing procedures, processing and backlogs, as well as the performance of specific government programs such as the Transition Assistance Program and the Disabled Assistance Program.

Online registration and additional information are available at:

www.veteransnationalsymposium.org

For brochures and flyers, contact Velma Hart at National Headquarters (1-877-7AMVETS).

TRAINING OF VBA PERSONNEL

Over the past few years, The American Legion's Quality Review Team has visited almost 40 VA regional offices for the purpose of assessing their overall operations. This assessment includes a review of recently adjudicated claims. Our site visits have found that frequently there have been an insufficient number of supervisors or too many inexperienced supervisors to provide trainees the necessary mentoring, training, and quality assurance. In addition, at many stations, ongoing training for the new hires as well as more experienced staff was postponed or suspended in order to focus maximum effort on production. However, we are encouraged by the Under Secretary for Benefits' public commitment to improving the training of VBA personnel and we optimistically anticipate improvements in this area in 2006. (*The American Legion Bulletin*, June 8, 2006)

ITEMS REQUESTED BY TROOPS

Orange Listerine	Large Braun coffee filters	Old Spice brand body wash & clear gel deodorant
Twizzlers, Slim Jims	Terryaki & spicy beef jerky	Fingernail brush, Hand sanitizer
Dried fruit (apples, raisins, (bananas pineapple, etc.)	Small cereal multi-boxes (Apple Jacks, Lucky Charms, etc.)	Mike & Ike's candy, Fruit cups, Pop Tarts
Ziploc bags (sandwich & one gallon sizes),	COOKIES—ANY KIND!!!	Chocolate, vanilla & tapioca pudding snack packs
		Tuna lunch packets

You may drop your donations off at the Veterans Affairs Office

**VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE
OF LEXINGTON COUNTY
605 West Main Street, Suite 101
Lexington, SC 29072
(803) 785-8400**

AUGUST OUTREACH PROGRAM

August 1st	8-12	Batesburg-Leesville
August 8 th	9-12	Chapin
August 15th	8-12	Swansea

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Lexington Main Office:	785-8400
From Batesburg-Leesville:	332-8400
From Chapin:	941-0231