



LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"

January/February 2020



Lexington, SC.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|----|
| At-a-Glance Calendar/From the Director | 2 |
| Veteran ID Cards | 3 |
| Why I Served Series | 5 |
| Ft. Jackson National Cemetery | 6 |
| On This Day in History | 7 |
| County Offices Closed | 8 |
| The History of Buffalo Bill Cody | 9 |
| Dang-it Doll Workshops | 10 |
| VA Patient Advocates | 11 |
| Changes at Arlington National Cemetery | 13 |
| Outreach Dates and Times | 14 |
| Featured Medal | 15 |

**At a Glance Calendar
January & February**

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Weekly on Tuesdays in January | Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon |
| Wednesday, January 1st | New Years Day County Offices Closed |
| Thursday, January 2nd | Gaston Outreach |
| Friday, January 3rd | Chapin Outreach |
| Saturday, January 11th | Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information, see page 10 |
| Wednesday, January 15th | County Council Meeting |
| Monday, January 20th | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day County Offices Closed |
| Tuesday, January 28th | County Council Meeting |
| Weekly on Tuesdays in February | Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon |
| Sunday, February 2nd | Groundhog Day |
| Thursday, February 6th | Gaston Outreach |
| Friday, February 7th | Chapin Outreach |
| Saturday, February 8th | Dang-it Doll Workshop - for more information, see page 10 |
| Tuesday, February 11th | Batesburg/Leesville Outreach County Council Meeting |
| Friday, February 14th | Valentine's Day |
| Monday, February 17th | President's Day County Offices Closed |
| Tuesday, February 25th | County Council Meeting |
| Saturday, February 29th | Presidential Preference Poll - For more information, see page 5 |

From the Director...

As the New Year begins, we are continually thankful for the opportunity to serve Veterans. We take great pride in the work we do every day and always want to get it right. The VA made many changes for improvement in 2019 with the Appeals Modernization Act and the Mission Act. Both of these landmark law changes have made significant, positive changes throughout the VA. We anticipate more VA changes for the better in 2020 and will keep you informed in this newsletter.

I attended many Christmas functions during December at local Veterans service organizations and in the community. It was a joy to meet and greet old and new friends.

We all wish each of you a blessed Happy New Year to you and your families. We stand ready to assist Veterans and their families in 2020 with the same care and compassion as in previous years.

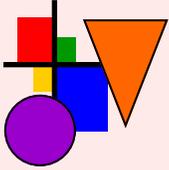
Happy New Year!

Enjoying the journey,

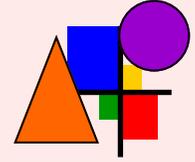


CALENDAR KEY

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



Veterans ID Cards



There are several different types of Veteran ID cards. All are used for different things and there are certain criteria for each.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ID CARD

The Department of Defense issues distinct identification cards to uniformed service members, their family members and other eligible individuals to serve as proof of the cardholder's identity and Department of Defense affiliation. These ID cards facilitate access to military installation services and convey uniformed services benefits where applicable. It is important to understand the types of ID cards, how you keep your card up to date, and steps to keep your ID secure. The two main types of ID cards are: The Common Access Card (CAC) and the Uniformed Services (USID) card. The list that follows provides general descriptions of the CAC and USID cards.

- **The Common Access Card** is the standard ID card for active uniformed service personnel, Selected Reserve members, Department of Defense civilian employees and eligible contractor personnel. It is the primary card used to grant physical access to installations, buildings and controlled spaces, and logical access to Department of Defense computer networks and systems.
- **The Uniformed Services ID Card** is issued to members of the Individual Ready Reserves and inactive National Guard, retired and former service members who are eligible for or receiving retired pay and benefits (including those on the Temporary or Permanent Disability Retired Lists), eligible family members of current and retired uniformed service members, and other eligible populations as described in Department of Defense policy.
- **The Department of Defense Civilian Retiree Card** is for civilians who have retired from any Department of Defense component or agency.

PHASE I
Remove Dependent SSN
TESLIN CARD FAMILY (Dependent ID Card)
DD Form 1173

Dependent SSN will be replaced with XXX-XX-XXXX
Sponsor SSN will remain visible

PHASE II
Remove All Printed SSNs
TESLIN CARD FAMILY (All ID Cards)
GENEVA CONVENTIONS CARD FAMILY

Sponsor SSN will be replaced with XXX-XX-XXXX
Cardholder SSN will be replaced with XXX-XX-XXXX
SSN will be truncated to only show the last four digits of the cardholder's SSN

PHASE III
Remove SSN's Embedded in Barcodes
TESLIN CARD FAMILY (All ID Cards)
CAC CARD FAMILY

SSN will be removed from barcodes
SSN will be removed from barcodes

CAC and Teslin Card Identification Chart
For more information regarding the SSN Reduction Plan, please visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/smartcard

Continued on page 4

Veterans ID cards continued from page 3



VETERAN HEALTH IDENTIFICATION CARD

When you're enrolled in VA health care, you'll use your Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to check in to your appointments at VA medical centers. This secure ID card keeps your personal information safe while giving the VA medical facility the information they need to easily access your VA health record. You may also use this card to get discounts offered to Veterans at many stores, businesses, and restaurants. If you have a VHIC, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a Veteran or to get retail or business

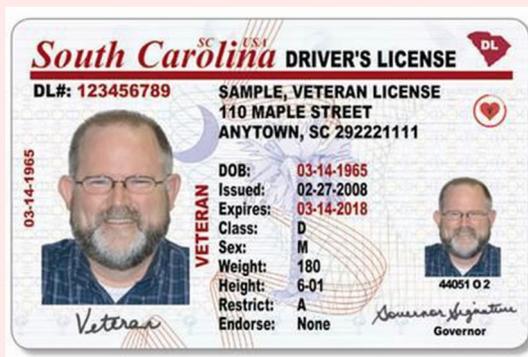
discounts. **Note:** You can't use your VHIC as a credit card or insurance card. It doesn't pay copays or authorize care at non-VA health facilities.

VETERAN ID CARD

A Veteran ID Card (VIC) is a form of photo ID you can use to get discounts offered to Veterans at many restaurants, hotels, stores and other businesses. You may be eligible for a card if you meet both of the requirements listed below.

- You served on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the National Guard (including the Coast Guard), **AND**
- You received an honorable or general discharge (under honorable conditions)

If you received an other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable discharge, you're not eligible for a Veteran ID card. If you have an uncharacterized or unknown discharge status, your eligibility will be verified upon applying. You will need to provide a copy of your discharge papers when you apply as proof of the character of discharge.

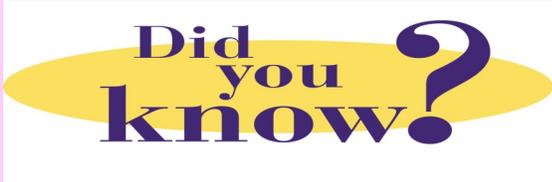


VETERAN DESIGNATION ON A SC DRIVER'S LICENSE

The SCDMV offers a "Veteran" designation on beginner's permits, driver's licenses, and identification cards if you served honorably in the United States Armed Forces. If you're interested in adding this designation, you may present one of the military documents listed below:

- Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DoD Form DD-214) that **must** show a characterization of service or discharge status of 'honorable' or 'general under honorable conditions'. *If you were discharged before 1950, you **must** provide a Certificate of Discharge or Enlisted Separation Paper because the DoD Form DD-214 did not exist until January 1, 1950.*
- National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service (NGB Form 22) that **must** show: a characterization of service or discharge status of honorable or general under honorable conditions; and at least **twenty years** of **qualifying** military service in the National Guard.
- Letter from a Military Reserve component notifying you of your eligibility for retirement pay at age sixty because of your **twenty-years of service**.

There is no fee to add the "Veteran" designation to your beginner's permit, driver's license, or identification card. If you're interested in adding this marking, you must visit an SCDMV branch with one of the military documents listed above. If an acceptable military document is already on file with the SCDMV, you do not have to present it again to add "Veteran" to your beginner's permit, license, or ID card.



The VA has a new
suicide hotline number.
It is 1-855-948-2311.

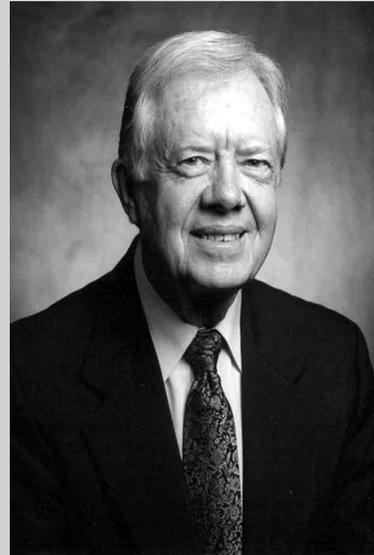
UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Saturday, February 29, 2020
Presidential Preference Primary

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



“The experience of democracy
is like the experience of life
itself - always changing,
infinite in its variety,
sometimes turbulent, and all



the more
valuable
for having
been tested
by
adversity.”

- Jimmy
Carter

“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 new 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.



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.

Fort Jackson National Cemetery

The 585-acre national cemetery in Richland County, South Carolina, will serve Veterans' needs well into the next century. The cemetery is located about a quarter of a mile off Interstate 20 on property formerly held by Fort Jackson.



With the passage of the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Congress directed the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to establish six new national cemeteries. A demographic study of the nationwide Veteran population identified the Columbia-Greenville area as lacking burial options. Four sites were considered and in 2008 the U.S. Department of Defense transferred land used for field training exercises to National Cemetery Administration for the purpose of developing Fort Jackson National Cemetery. The cemetery was formally dedicated the same year and opened for burials in 2009. Fort Jackson National Cemetery is the third national cemetery established in South Carolina and the 126th in the national cemetery system.



In July 2007, the VA awarded the cemetery design contract to Davis Floyd, Inc. In May 2008, the VA began to develop a 15-acre early burial area with temporary facilities. The cemetery construction project was completed in June of 2015. The completed 50-acre interment area will provide 5,704 full-casket gravesites, including 4,224 pre-placed crypts, 1,085 in-ground cremation sites and 2,000 columbarium niches. Also included with the project will be an administration and public information center, public restrooms, a maintenance facility, a cemetery entrance area, committal shelters for funeral services, a flag assembly area, and supporting infrastructure including roads, utilities, landscaping and irrigation.

Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces who have met a minimum active duty service requirement and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. A Veteran's spouse, widow or widower, minor dependent children, and under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities may also be eligible for burial. Eligible spouses and children may be buried even if they predecease the Veteran. Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty or who die while on training duty, or were eligible for retired pay, may also be eligible for burial.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of January & February?



January 3, 1959 – Alaska was admitted as the 49th US state.



January 8, 1935 - Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.

January 11, 1964 - The U.S. Surgeon General declared cigarettes may be hazardous to health.

January 20, 1981 - Ronald Reagan became president of the United States at the age of 69, the oldest president to take office.

January 24, 1848 – The California gold rush began.



January 25, 1947 - Gangster Al Capone died in Miami at age 48 from syphilis.

January 28, 1915 – The US Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service.



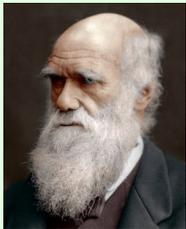
January 30, 1948 - Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in New Delhi, India, by a religious fanatic.

February 3, 1870 - The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, guaranteeing the right of citizens to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.



February 6, 1895 - Legendary baseball player George Herman "Babe" Ruth was born in Baltimore, Maryland.

February 12, 1809 - Author and naturalist Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England.



February 17, 1865 - Fort Sumter in South Carolina was returned to the Union after nearly a year and a half under Confederate control.

February 17, 1909 - Apache Chief Geronimo died while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

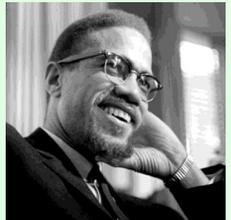


February 21, 1965 - Former Black Muslim leader Malcolm X was shot and killed in New York City.

February 26, 1846 – American frontiersman “Buffalo Bill” Cody was born in Scott County, Indiana.



February 27, 1991 - In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces.





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

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 Steve Massingale, Mary Cochran, Ryan Barnes and Richard Niehe. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of November and December.

THANKS



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

Wednesday, January 1st - New Years Day
Monday, January 20th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, February 20th - President's Day

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.

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.



Did You Know...

The Department of Defense, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs have all announced a 1.6% cost of living increase for 2020.

That means if you draw benefits from all three agencies, each monthly benefit will be increased by 1.6% starting in January of 2020.

The History of Buffalo Bill Cody

William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody was an American soldier, bison hunter, and showman. He was born on February 26, 1846, on a farm just outside Le Claire, Iowa to his parents, Isaac and Mary Ann Cody. At the age of 14, in 1860, Cody was struck by gold fever, with news of gold at Fort Colville and the Holcomb Valley Gold Rush in California. On his way to the gold fields, however, he met an agent for the Pony Express. He signed with them, and after building several stations and corrals, Cody was given a job as a rider. Cody claimed to have had many jobs, including trapper, bullwhacker, "Fifty-Niner" in Colorado, Pony Express rider in 1860, wagonmaster, stagecoach driver, and a hotel manager, but historians have had difficulty documenting them. He may have fabricated some for publicity.



Cody wanted to enlist as a soldier in the Union Army during the American Civil War but was refused because of his young age. He began working with a freight caravan that delivered supplies to Fort Laramie in present-day Wyoming. In 1863, at age 17, he enlisted as a teamster with the rank of private in Company H, 7th Kansas Cavalry, and served until discharged in 1865. The next year, Cody married Louisa Frederici. They had four children.

In 1867, with construction of the Kansas Pacific Railway completing through Hays City and Rome, Cody was granted leave of absence to hunt buffalo to supply railroad construction workers with meat. Cody received the nickname "Buffalo Bill" after the American Civil War, when he had a contract to supply Kansas Pacific Railroad workers with buffalo meat. Cody is purported to have killed 4,282 buffalo in eighteen months in 1867 and 1868. Cody and another hunter, Bill Comstock, competed in an eight-hour buffalo-shooting match over the exclusive right to use the name, which Cody won by killing 68 animals to Comstock's 48.

Cody was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1872 for gallantry as an Army scout in the Indian Wars. It was revoked in 1917, along with medals of 910 other recipients, when Congress authorized the War Department to revoke prior Army Medal of Honor awards it had considered dubious since the introduction of strict regulations in 1897. All civilian medals were revoked, including civilian scouts, since they did not meet the basic criterion of being officers or enlisted soldiers, which had been expressly listed in every authorizing statute ever enacted. Cody was one of five scouts affected. Their medals were stripped shortly after Cody died.

One of the most famous and well-known figures of the American Old West, Buffalo Bill's legend began to spread when he was only 23. Shortly thereafter he started performing in shows that displayed cowboy themes and episodes from the frontier and Indian Wars. He founded *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* in 1883, taking his large company on tours in the United States and, beginning in 1887, in Great Britain and continental Europe.



Cody died on January 10, 1917. He was baptized in the Catholic Church the day before his death by Father Christopher Walsh of the Denver Cathedral. He received a full Masonic funeral. Upon the news of Cody's death, tributes were made by King George V, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and President Woodrow Wilson. His funeral service was held at the Elks Lodge Hall in Denver.



Cody was known as a conservationist who spoke out against hide-hunting and advocated the establishment of a hunting season. Cody was honored by two U.S. postage stamps. Buffalo Bill has been portrayed in many literary, musical, and theatrical works, movies, and television shows, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, when Westerns were most popular. The NFL team the Buffalo Bills is named after Buffalo Bill after a fan cast the idea in a contest to find the next team name.

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, January 11th & Saturday, February 8th from 10am to 2pm
Cayce Masonic Lodge, 1701 12th Street, Cayce, SC.

The Lodge Brothers will be preparing their famous Hot Dog Lunch for everyone.

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.



VA Patient Advocates

Available at every medical center, Patient Advocates are highly trained professionals who can help resolve your concerns about any aspect of your health care experience, particularly those concerns that cannot be resolved at the point of care. Patient Advocates listen to any questions, problems, or special needs you have and refer your concerns to the appropriate Medical Center staff for resolution.

The Patient Advocate program seeks to personally give you and your family the security of knowing someone is available to focus on your individual concerns and rights as a patient. If you or a Veteran you care for has not been able to resolve important issues related to VA health care through other means of communications, please contact one of the highly-skilled Patient Advocates. Your feedback about the care and services you receive while in the Medical Center provides the VA an opportunity to make changes and improvements; feedback gives you the opportunity to make a suggestion, and correct problems or give a compliment.

During your stay, you may be surveyed by one of the Patient Advocates. This is a short patient satisfaction survey asking for feedback about your perception of the care you are receiving. You may answer your quick card anonymously, or you may provide your name and contact information if you would like the VA to contact you about the resolution of any issues. After your visit, you may receive a confidential questionnaire in the mail asking you about your most recent outpatient or inpatient treatment at our medical center. Please use the survey to let the VA know of any concerns, complaints, or questions you have about your care, so that the VA can resolve them.

We also appreciate compliments about what we are doing right. Employees must respect and support your rights as a patient.

If you would like more information about your rights as a patient, please talk with your VA treatment team members or if necessary, a Patient Advocate. Patient Rights and Responsibilities are posted in outpatient and inpatient areas. If you have not received a copy of your Rights and Responsibilities, please contact a Patient Advocate who can provide you with a copy. All Dorn VAMC Patient Advocate's extensions go to one central line, 803-776-4000 ext. 6937. If you need to speak to a patient advocate, use ext. 5933, which is the patient advocate check in number.



JANUARY IS
NATIONAL
SOUP
MONTH!!!



FEBRUARY IS
NATIONAL
GRAPEFRUIT
MONTH!!!



List of Common Allowable (Recurring) Medical Expenses for an Initial Claim Application

The list below shows recurring VA allowable medical expenses for the initial claim application for Veteran and Survivor pension benefits. The list is not all-inclusive and must be unreimbursed by insurance. They must be paid for by the applicant and are used to reduce income that exceeds the VA income limits.

1. Medicare Part B Premiums
2. Medicare Part D Premiums
3. Supplemental Medical Insurance Premiums
4. Long Term Care Insurance Premiums
5. Medical Monitoring Costs (like Life Alert)
6. Nursing Home Fees
7. Assisted Living Fees
8. Independent or Residential Living Fees
9. Adult Day Care Fees
10. In-home Caregiver/Home Health Fees

Tomato Soup

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

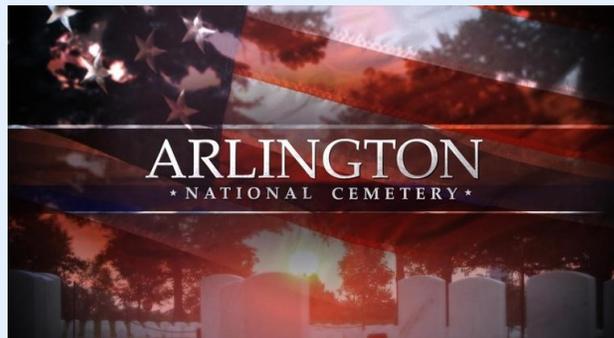
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 8 ripe tomatoes, washed and chopped or 2 (14.5 ounce) cans chopped tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried basil or 1 Tablespoon fresh basil, washed (optional)
- salt (optional)
- pepper (optional)

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat oil.
3. Add onion and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes or until tender.
4. Stir in tomatoes. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 20 minutes. Stir a few times as soup is cooking.
5. Add broth and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Stir in basil, salt, and pepper if desired.
7. For smooth soup, allow to cool slightly, move contents to a blender and blend to desired consistency. Return to saucepan and heat to simmer.



Acting Secretary of the Army announces proposed changes to eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery



The Honorable Ryan D. McCarthy, Acting Secretary of the Army, has proposed revised eligibility criteria for interment and inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). The Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of the Army to establish revised eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery functioning as an active burial ground “well into the future” – defined as 150 years.

At the outset, the Army established critical imperatives to guide this effort: sacrifice; service; and impact. The process involved more than two and a half years of thoughtful deliberation, public outreach and surveys – including feedback from Veterans and military service organizations – and active engagement with ANC senior leaders and the ANC Advisory Committee.

While ANC continues to look for ways to expand, that alone will not solve the existing demand for burial space. If no changes are made, ANC will be closed to new interments by the mid-2050s – even for Medal of Honor recipients. In addition to directing ANC to preserve 1,000 gravesites for current and future Medal of Honor recipients, the secretary proposed revised eligibility criteria for those who honorably served our nation, as broadly outlined below:

For below-ground interment:

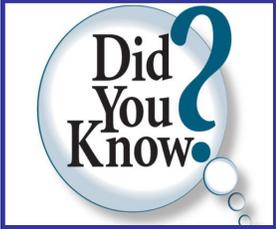
- Killed in Action, to include repatriated remains of service members
- Award recipients of the Silver Star and above who also served in combat
- Recipients of the Purple Heart
- Combat-related service deaths while conducting uniquely military activities
- Former Prisoners of War
- Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States
- Veterans with combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation’s security at the highest levels of public service

For above-ground inurnment:

- World War II-era veterans, to include legislated active duty designees
- Retirees from the armed forces who are eligible to receive retired pay but are not otherwise eligible for interment
- Veterans who have served a minimum of two years on active duty and who have served in combat
- Veterans without combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation’s security at the highest levels of public service

Eventual implementation of revised eligibility at ANC will not affect previously scheduled services. Additionally, the proposed revisions at ANC will not affect Veterans’ burial benefits or Veteran eligibility at Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries and state Veterans cemeteries.

The next step to implement the proposed rule is notice and public comment rulemaking in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, amending the current eligibility rule found at 32 Code of Federal Regulations part 553. We expect the clearance process to take a minimum of nine months to make public in the Federal Register for citizens to comment.



All Patient Advocate extensions go to one central line, 803-776-4000 ext. 6937.

If you need to speak to a patient advocate, use extension 5933. This is for the Patient Advocate check-in area.



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 Batesburg/Leesville during the month of January.

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.



Featured Medal:

Southwest Asia Service Medal

The Southwest Asia Service Medal (SASM) is a military award of the United States Armed Forces, which was created by order of President George H.W. Bush on March 12, 1991. The award is intended to recognize those military service members who performed duty during the years of the Persian Gulf War. The medal was designed by Nadine Russell of the Army's Institute of Heraldry.

Individuals authorized the Southwest Asia Service Medal must have served in support of Operation Desert Shield or Desert Storm, in one or more of the following areas, between August 2, 1990 and November 30, 1995:

- Persian Gulf
- Red Sea
- Gulf of Oman
- Gulf of Aden
- that portion of the Arabian Sea that lies north of 10 degrees North latitude and west of 68 degrees East longitude
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Saudi Arabia
- Oman
- Bahrain
- Qatar
- United Arab Emirates

Individuals serving in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Jordan (including the airspace and territorial waters) directly supporting combat operations between January 17, 1991 and April 11, 1991 are also eligible for this award.

To receive the award, a service member must be: attached to or regularly serving for one or more days with an organization participating in ground/shore military operations; attached to or regularly serving for one or more days aboard a naval vessel directly supporting military operations; actually participating as a crew member in one or more aerial flights directly supporting military operations in the areas designated; or serving on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days, except, if a waiver is authorized for personnel participating in actual combat.

For those service members who performed "home service" during the Persian Gulf War, such as support personnel in the United States, the Southwest Asia Service Medal is not authorized. The award is also not authorized for those who performed support of the Persian Gulf War from European or Pacific bases.

One bronze service star will be worn for participation in each designated campaign. Each recipient of the medal should wear at least one campaign star.



Picture of the Medal and Ribbon.

Coming in the Next Issue...

***Aid & Attendance Benefits,
Burn Pits, and Fisher House***