



# LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS NEWS

*"Serving those who served and sacrificed for America"*

September/October 2020



Lexington, SC.

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**At a Glance Calendar  
September/October**

Weekly on Tuesdays in September	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon See page 11 for more information
Monday, September 7th	Labor Day County offices closed
Tuesday, September 8th	County Council Meeting
Friday, September 11th	Patriot's Day
Sunday, September 13th	Grandparents Day
Tuesday, September 22nd	Autumn Begins
Weekly on Tuesdays in October	Lexington County Veterans Group Meeting from 10am to 12 noon See page 11 for more information
Tuesday, October 13th	County Council Meeting
Tuesday, October 27th	County Council Meeting
Saturday, October 31st	Halloween

**CALENDAR KEY**

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



*From the Director...*

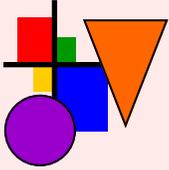
It has been an amazing summer and we are continuing our service to Veterans and their families. We are open by appointment only and cannot accommodate walk-ins until further notice. We appreciate the support from all of our Veterans during this medical crisis. We continue to serve you via phone, fax, email and US mail. We maintain hope that this virus can be eradicated and we can all get back to a somewhat normal lifestyle.

As we head into fall and hopefully college football, we are reminded that school is back in session and we hope the best for all of those students, educators and administrators. We hope this is a successful academic school year for all of you!

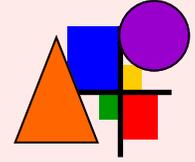
If we can help you navigate the VA claims system with questions, guidance or advice, please give us a call at 803-785-8400.

Enjoying, the journey,



# *Survivor's Benefits*



## **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation**

For a survivor to be eligible for Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC), the Veteran's death must have resulted from one of the following causes:

- 1 - A disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on active duty or active duty for training.
- 2 - An injury, heart attack, cardiac arrest, or stroke incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on inactive duty for training.
- 3- A service-connected disability or a condition directly related to a service-connected disability.



DIC also may be paid to certain survivors of Veterans who were totally disabled from service-connected conditions at the time of death, even though their service-connected disabilities did not cause their deaths. The survivor qualifies if the Veteran was:

- 1 - Continuously rated totally disabled for a period of 10 years immediately preceding death; or
- 2 - Continuously rated totally disabled from the date of military discharge and for the last 5 years immediately preceding death; or
- 3 - A former POW who died after September 30, 1999, and who was continuously rated disabled for a period of at least one year immediately preceding death.

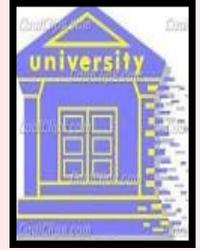
There is also a program called Parents' DIC. The VA provides an income-based monthly benefit to the surviving parent(s) of a service member or Veteran whose death was service-related. When countable income exceeds the limit set by law, no benefits are payable. The spouse's income must also be included if living with a spouse. A spouse may be the other parent of the deceased Veteran, or a spouse from remarriage. Unreimbursed medical expenses may be used to reduce countable income. Benefit rates and income limits change annually. DIC ends at midnight of the date of remarriage if a widow is under age 57; after age 57, the marital status does not affect this benefit.



## **Death Pension**

The VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. To be eligible, spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-support because of disability before age 18. The Veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge. Longer periods of service may be required for Veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, or October 16, 1981, if an officer. If the Veteran died in service but not in the line of duty, the death pension may be payable if the Veteran completed at least two years of honorable service.

Continued on page 4



## Burial and Memorial Benefits for Survivors

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers several burial and memorial benefits for eligible survivors and dependents. These benefits may include internment at a state or national Veterans cemetery, plot, marker and more.

## Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance

The VA provides educational assistance to qualifying dependents as follows:

1 - The spouse or child of a service member or Veteran who either died of a service-connected disability, or who has a permanent and total service-connected disability, or who died while such disability existed.

2 - The spouse or child of a service member listed for more than 90 days as currently Missing In Action (MIA), captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or detained or interned by a foreign government or power.

3 - The spouse or child of a service member who is hospitalized or is receiving outpatient care or treatment for a disability that is determined to be totally and permanently disabling, incurred or aggravated due to active duty, and for which the service member is likely to be discharged from military service.



Surviving spouses lose eligibility if they remarry before age 57 or are living with another person who has been held out publicly as their spouse. They can regain eligibility if their remarriage ends by death or divorce or if they cease living with the person. Dependent children do not lose eligibility if the surviving spouse remarries. The period of eligibility of Veterans' spouses expires 10 years from either the date they became eligible or the date of the Veterans' death. The VA may grant an extension. Children generally must be between the ages of 18 and 26 to receive educational benefits, though extensions may be granted. The period of eligibility for spouses of service members who died on active duty expires 20 years from the date of death. This is a change in law that became effective December 10, 2004. Spouses of service members who died on active duty whose 10-year eligibility period expired before December 10, 2004, now have 20 years from that date of death to use educational benefits. Effective October 10, 2008, Public Law 110-389 provides a 20-year period of eligibility for spouses of Veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability rating effective within 3 years of release from active duty.

## VA Home Loan Guaranty



A VA loan guaranty to acquire a home may be available to an unmarried spouse of a Veteran or service member who died as a result of service-connected disabilities, a surviving spouse who remarries after age 57, or to a spouse of a service member officially listed as MIA or who is currently a POW for more than 90 days. Spouses of those listed MIA/POW are limited to one loan.

## "No-Fee" Passports

"No-fee" passports are available to immediate family members (spouse, children, parents, brothers, and sisters) for the expressed purpose of visiting their loved one's grave or memorialization site at an American military cemetery on foreign soil. For additional information, write to the American Battle Monuments Commission, Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500, 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201, or telephone 703-696-6897, or visit the website at [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov).



## VA expands access to virtual hearings

### *Virtual hearings provide Veterans a new option to have their appeal heard*

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) has announced it is expanding access to virtual hearings to all Veterans awaiting their Board hearing after successfully testing the capabilities during the last year.

Virtual hearings are a secure, confidential and convenient option for Veterans and their representative to have their Board hearing held from a location of their choosing.

The Board moved quickly to put this option into place in response to COVID-19 and the temporary suspension of in-person hearings. For Veterans who opted to have a hearing, choosing the virtual hearing will allow the Board to decide a Veteran's appeal more quickly.

Virtual hearings became a permanent option for Veterans, April 10, when President Trump signed the VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act into law. To date, the Board has successfully held more than 640 virtual hearings and has the capacity to hold 250 per week. There are many openings on the virtual hearing docket for Veterans and their representatives considering this option.

"Providing Veterans the option to participate in their Board hearings from a location of their choosing is yet another way VA and the Board are continuing to modernize," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This option helps VA ensure Veterans continue to receive important benefits and services, especially in these difficult times."



## 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 *Chris Murrin, Roy Mefford, and Mike Gordon*. These individuals volunteered their time to say the Pledge of Allegiance during the months of July & August.



# ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**Did you know that the following events occurred during the months of September & October?**



**September 1, 1939** – Hitler's armies invaded Poland starting WWII in Europe.

**September 5, 1847** - Wild West legend Jesse James was born in Centerville, Missouri.

**September 7, 1963** - The Professional Football Hall of Fame was dedicated in Canton, Ohio.

**September 11, 2001** – The worse terrorists attack in US history occurred as four large passenger jets were hijacked and then crashed; killing nearly 3,000 people.

**September 15, 1916** – Tanks were first used in combat.

**September 17, 1930**—Construction began on the Hoover Dam.

**September 18, 1947** – The US Air Force was established as a separate military service.

**September 23, 1991** - Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union.

**September 24, 1957** - President Eisenhower ordered the National Guard to enforce racial integration of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas.

**September 25, 1789** – The first US Congress proposed 12 Amendments to the Constitution, ten of which, comprising the Bill of Rights, were ratified.

**October 2, 1968** - California's Redwood National Park was established.

**October 8, 1871** – The great fire in Chicago erupted.

**October 13, 1775** – The US Navy was born.

**October 15, 1917** - World War I spy Mata Hari was executed by a French firing squad at Vincennes Barracks, outside Paris.

**October 20, 1818** – The US and Britain agreed to set the US/Canadian border at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel.

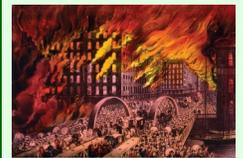
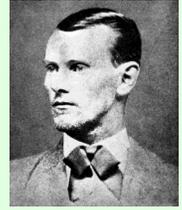
**October 21, 1917** – Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie was born in Cheraw, SC.

**October 24, 1945** – The United Nations was founded.

**October 26, 1825** - The Erie Canal opened as the first major man-made waterway in America.

**October 28, 1919** – The Statue of Liberty was dedicated in New York harbor.

**October 30, 1990** - Great Britain was connected with the European continent, via a new rail tunnel under the English Channel.



## September is National Chicken Month!



## October is National Apple Month!



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.

"It ain't where you start in life, it's where you end up. And what you did along the way."

- Colin Powell



## "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](mailto:hcahill@lex-co.com) to set this up. He records the interviews in our conference room, where you will have privacy and can take your time in being interviewed. Harrison usually pares down these interviews to three to five minute videos that are shown on the Lexington County Facebook page and the TV in our office.

## Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to your Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your



routing and account number along with the amount that is being deposited. If you are changing your direct deposit, you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.

## DID YOU KNOW...

All Dang-it Dolls workshops have been temporary suspended due to the COVID 19 virus. Our office will let you know of any updates when we get them.



## The History of Redwood National Park



Home of the world's tallest trees, this World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve protects nearly half of the world's old-growth redwoods, including champion specimens more than 370 feet in height—or five stories taller than the Statue of Liberty. Walk, bike, camp or horseback ride along 200 miles of trails in the park system, which in a unique state/federal partnership includes Jedediah Smith Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Parks. The park's forests, hills, rivers and coastline support a rich mosaic of life, including Roosevelt Elk, whales, seals and seasonal wildflowers such as lupine and rhododendron. The sprawling park system also provides many opportunities for scenic drives.

The Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) are a complex of several state and national parks located in the United States, along the coast of northern California. Comprising Redwood National Park (established 1968) and California's Del Norte Coast, Jedediah Smith, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Parks (dating from the 1920s), the combined RNSP contain 139,000 acres, and feature old-growth temperate rainforests. Located entirely within Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, the four parks, together, protect 45% of all remaining coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) old-growth forests, totaling at least 38,982 acres. These trees are the tallest, among the oldest, and one of the most massive tree species on Earth. In addition to the redwood forests, the parks preserve other indigenous flora, fauna, grassland prairie, cultural resources, portions of rivers and other streams, and 37 miles of pristine coastline.

In 1850, old-growth redwood forest covered more than 2,000,000 acres of the California coast. The northern portion of that area, originally inhabited by Native Americans, attracted many lumbermen and others turned gold miners when a minor gold rush brought them to the region. Failing in efforts to strike it rich in gold, these men turned toward harvesting the giant trees for booming development in San Francisco and other places on the West Coast. After many decades of unrestricted clear-cut logging, serious efforts toward conservation began. By the 1920s the work of the Save the Redwoods League, founded in 1918 to preserve remaining old-growth redwoods, resulted in the establishment of Prairie Creek, Del Norte Coast, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks among others. Redwood National Park was created in 1968, by which time nearly 90% of the original redwood trees had been logged. The National Park Service (NPS) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) administratively combined Redwood National Park with the three abutting Redwood State Parks in 1994 for the purpose of cooperative forest management and stabilization of forests and watersheds as a single unit.

As California created a state park system, beginning in 1927, three of the preserved redwood areas became Prairie Creek Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks. A fourth became Humboldt Redwoods State Park, by far the largest of the individual Redwood State Parks, but not in the Redwood National and State Park system. Because of the high demand for lumber during World War II and the construction boom that followed in the 1950s, the creation of a national park was delayed. Efforts by the Save the Redwoods League, the Sierra Club, and the National Geographic Society to create a national park began in the early 1960s. After intense lobbying of Congress, the bill creating Redwood National Park was signed by President Lyndon Johnson on October 2, 1968. The Save the Redwoods League and other entities purchased over 100,000 acres, which were added to existing state parks. Amidst both local support of environmentalists and opposition from local loggers and logging companies, 48,000 acres were added to Redwood National Park in a major expansion in 1978. However, only a fifth of that land was old-growth forest, the rest having been logged. This expansion protected the watershed along Redwood Creek from being adversely affected by logging operations outside the park. The federal and state parks were administratively combined in 1994. The United Nations designated Redwood National and State Parks a World Heritage Site on September 5, 1980. The evaluation committee noted



50 prehistoric archaeological sites, spanning 4,500 years.

Continued on page 15



## CARES Act Extends VA Home Loan Pre-Foreclosure Options

On March 27th, the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, into law to help Americans economically impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to help homeowners avoid home foreclosure. As the country rallies together to prevent further spread of the coronavirus, VA's Loan Guaranty Service is working to assist Veterans. The service is specifically focused on ensuring our Veterans and their families facing temporary or more long-term difficulty paying their monthly mortgage understand their options. How does this law affect my VA home loan? If you experience financial hardship caused directly or indirectly by COVID-19, then – as with any financial hardship – you should immediately contact your loan servicer (the company that accepts your monthly mortgage payments). If you do lose income, you always have options to avoid foreclosure on your VA home loan. Your options include forbearance extension under the CARES Act.

The CARES Act allows borrowers with government-backed loans (including VA loans) to request special forbearance – an agreement between you and your mortgage servicer – where your servicer agrees to either delay payments or to accept partial payments for one or more months. The details of any forbearance agreement are between you and your servicer, which means you don't have to call VA for permission. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has a video summarizing the mortgage forbearance changes.

You can request a forbearance for up to 180 days without paying late fees or other penalties by simply stating you are affected financially by the COVID-19 national emergency. No extra documentation is required. If necessary, you can request up to 180 additional days of forbearance before the first forbearance period ends. Your servicer cannot report delinquency if you take advantage of relief related to COVID-19 throughout the current emergency and 120 days afterward.

*What does "up to 180 days" mean?* Not all borrowers need 180 days. Your financial situation and ability to repay after the forbearance ends will help determine the length and terms of your forbearance agreement.

*What do you need to know about forbearance?* It is important to understand that all delayed payments covered in a forbearance period are still owed. For example: Your Monthly Mortgage Payment is \$1,100 and you request a forbearance for three months. After the three-month forbearance, you'll owe your mortgage servicer the \$3,300 of missed payments in addition to resuming your monthly mortgage payment of \$1,100. Your servicer will try to help you reach affordability, so you must be honest about your income, savings and expenses. VA encourages you to be realistic about what you can afford and how much time you will need. We don't want you to experience a worse financial situation in the future. If you attempt to overreport your income to keep your home, you could face an insurmountable debt and raise your risk of foreclosure. Your servicer does not have to accept partial payments unless that was part of the agreement. If you underreport your expected income to try to save money, your servicer may determine that you can't afford your loan and may raise your risk of foreclosure. Your servicer will try to verify that you can afford your mortgage. Building trust will go a long way to help you avoid foreclosure and negative effects on your credit.

*When are my missed payments due?* This depends on your forbearance agreement. Your repayment plan could be that you: Make the payments all at once, if you are financially able, or spread payments out over an agreed upon time period.

Continued on page 14

## Mulligatawny Soup

The name Mulligatawny means 'pepper water', and curry is the particular ingredient that gives this incredible soup such a delicious flavor.

prep: 20 minutes

cook: 1 hour

total: 1 hour 20 minutes

Servings: 6

Ingredients

½ cup chopped onion

1 carrot, diced

1 ½ tablespoons all-purpose flour

4 cups chicken broth

¼ cup white rice

Salt to taste

1 pinch dried thyme

2 stalks celery, chopped

¼ cup butter

1 ½ teaspoons curry powder

½ apple, cored and chopped

1 skinless, boneless chicken breast half - cut into cubes

Ground black pepper to taste

½ cup heavy cream, heated



Directions

Step 1

Sauté onions, celery, carrot, and butter in a large soup pot. Add flour and curry, and cook 5 more minutes. Add chicken stock, mix well, and bring to a boil. Simmer about 1/2 hour.

Step 2

Add apple, rice, chicken, salt, pepper, and thyme. Simmer 15-20 minutes, or until rice is done.

Step 3

When serving, add hot cream.



Always the first Monday in September, Labor Day is meant as a tribute to the American worker to whom the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country is made possible. The holiday started modestly in cities and towns, with the first celebration on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, held by the Central Labor Union. Given the growth of labor organizations at this time in American history and the era of industrialization, the idea of a day to honor the

American worker quickly spread to other cities and then to states. In 1884, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday. The observance of Labor Day began as a street parade to exhibit to the public "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations" of the community, followed by a relaxing day for the workers and their families. There is some doubt as to the individual who first proposed the holiday for workers. Most believe it was the idea of Peter J. Maguire (although recent research has shown that it might have been his brother Matthew's idea), a labor union leader who in 1882 proposed a celebration honoring the American worker. The date chosen was simply "convenient," according to Maguire, because it was midway between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. Although the day's focus on organized labor has diminished over the years, the legal holiday still marks the end of summer and the traditional time for children to return to school.

## 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. 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,***  
***at Crossroads Counseling Center, 130A Whiteford Way,***  
***Lexington, SC 29072***

*For further information, please visit their website at  
[lex-coveteransgroup.com](http://lex-coveteransgroup.com) or  
contact our office at 803-785-8400.*

The impacts due to COVID-19 are far reaching. The Debt Management Center (DMC) is helping our Veterans and beneficiaries.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING

- Suspended collections on new debts and halted issuing new debt collection letters
- Paused referral of delinquent debt to Department of the Treasury, Credit Alert Interactive Verification Reporting System, and Credit Reporting Agencies
- Offering temporary suspension of debt collection
- Providing extended payment arrangements
- Text messages sent directly to Veteran's phone accounts - 8.6M recipients
- Conducted a Borne the Battle Podcast with Public Affairs - reached 11M
- Communicated to Veterans via a letter, multiple emails, Facebook, website posts and blog updates

### WHERE TO GET UPDATES

We will continue to update our website: [www.va.gov/debtman](http://www.va.gov/debtman) with new information regarding the COVID-19 crisis. We will announce important dates regarding resumption of debt collection activities on our website.

### WHO TO CONTACT

For help with payment plans, please call us at 1-800-827-0648 or submit your online request to DMC at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/ask/>.

## VA Automobile Allowance



Service members and Veterans may be eligible for a one-time payment of not more than \$21,488.29 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance if you have certain service-connected disabilities. The grant is paid directly to the seller of the automobile and the service member or Veteran may only receive the automobile grant once in his/her lifetime. Certain service members and Veterans may also be eligible for adaptive equipment. Adaptive equipment includes, but is not limited to, power steering, power brakes, power windows, power seats, and special equipment necessary to assist the eligible person into and out of the vehicle. The VA may provide financial assistance in purchasing adaptive equipment more than once. This benefit is payable to either the seller or the Veteran or service member. **Important:** You must have prior VA approval before purchasing an automobile or adaptive equipment.

### ***Eligibility Requirements (Automobile Grant)***

1. You must be either a service member who is still on active duty or a Veteran, AND  
2. You must have one of the following disabilities that are either rated as service-connected or treated as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C 1151 or, for a service member, the result of disease incurred or injury contracted in or aggravated by active duty:

- A - Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet, OR
- B - Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands, OR
- C - Permanent impairment of vision in both eyes to a certain degree, OR
- D - Severe burn injury, OR
- E - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

### ***Eligibility Requirements (Adaptive Equipment)***

1. You must be either a Service member who is still on active duty or a Veteran, AND  
2. Meet the disability requirements for the automobile grant (see above), OR  
3. Have ankylosis (immobility of the joint) of one or both knees or hips that VA recognizes as being service-connected or treats as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C. 1151.

### ***Evidence Requirements***

To support a claim for automobile allowance, the evidence must show that you are service-connected or are treated as if service-connected under 38 U.S.C 1151 or, for a service member, the result of disease incurred or injury contracted in or aggravated by active duty, for a disability resulting in:

1. The loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet, OR
2. The loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands, OR
3. Permanent impairment of vision in both eyes, resulting in central Visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with glasses, **OR**
4. Central Visual acuity that is greater than 20/200, if there is a visual field defect in which your peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual fields subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye, **OR**
5. Severe burn injury: Deep partial thickness or full thickness burns resulting in scar formation that cause contractures and limit motion of one or more extremities or the trunk and preclude the effective operation of an automobile, **OR**
6. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

To support a claim for adaptive equipment, the evidence must show that you have a disability as shown above, **OR** you have ankylosis of at least one knee or one hip due to service-connected disability.

### ***How to Apply***

Complete VA Form 21-4502, "Application for Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment" and submit it to your local VA regional office. If you are entitled to adaptive equipment only (i.e., service connected for ankylosis of knees or hips) you should complete VA Form 10-1394, "Application for Adaptive Equipment - Motor Vehicle" and submit it to your local VA medical center.

## Emergency Senior Feeding Program

Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission (LCRAC) and Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission (ICRC)  
**Emergency Senior Feeding Program**

Thanks to BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina & the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation!

Must be 60 years and older, must not be a current nutrition program client, must be a resident of Lexington County or in area served by LCRAC or ICRC, must have a valid SC ID. If picking up for someone else, must show their ID.

Maximum 2 meal recipients per car. Both must have a valid ID.

Each recipient will receive a package containing 5 catered meals.

Each recipient is limited to 1 package per week.

Lines may begin at 9:30 am.

Meal distribution will begin at 10:30 am and continue until all food has been distributed.

### Monday

1. Batesburg-Leesville Leisure Center, 227 Highland Avenue, Batesburg, SC 29006 (LCRAC)
2. Midlands Sports Complex, 900 Pine Ridge Dr., West Columbia SC 29172 (LCRAC)
3. Swansea High School, 500 1 st St., Swansea, SC 29160 (LCRAC)
4. Tri-City Leisure Center, 485 Brooks Ave., West Columbia, SC 29169 (LCRAC)

### Tuesday

1. Gilbert-Summit Sports Complex, 100 Broad St., Gilbert SC 29054 (LCRAC)
2. Red Bank Baptist Church, 120 Community Drive, Lexington SC 29073 (LCRAC)
3. Pelion Sports Complex, 300 Fort St., Pelion, SC 29123 (LCRAC)
4. Crooked Creek Park, 1098 Old Lexington Hwy., Chapin SC 29036 (ICRC)

### Wednesday

1. Gibson Road Soccer Complex, Duffie Rd., Lexington SC 29072 (Turn by Lex Co Sheriff Dept and follow Duffie to the park entrance), (LCRAC)
2. Howard Park Sports Complex, 200 Cougar Drive, West Columbia, SC 29169 (LCRAC)
3. Seven Oaks Park, 200 Leisure Lane, Columbia, SC 29210 (ICRC)

### Thursday

1. Pine Grove Sports Complex, 701 Barnwell Road, West Columbia, SC 29073 (LCRAC)
2. Spires Recreation Center, 1500 Dunbar Road, Cayce, SC 29033 (LCRAC)

### Friday

1. Sandhills Middle School, 582 Meadowfield Road, Gaston SC 29053 (LCRAC)
2. Tri-City Leisure Center, 485 Brooks Ave., West Columbia, SC 29169 (LCRAC)
3. Gibson Road Soccer Complex, Duffie Rd., Lexington SC 29072 (Turn by Lex Co Sheriff Dept and follow Duffie to the park entrance) (LCRAC)



*Aster*

**SEPTEMBER  
BIRTH FLOWER**

Wisdom  
Faith  
Valour



*Marigold*

**OCTOBER  
BIRTH FLOWER**

Passionate  
Creative  
Driven

## DID YOU KNOW?

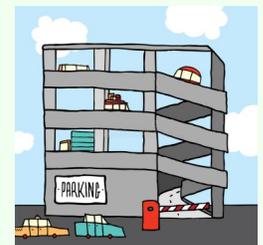


The VA Regional office is still closed to the public.

Presently, there is no opening date scheduled at this time.

Most VA employees are working from home.

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



# COVID-19 Informational Update from Columbia VA Medical Center

Due to the ongoing increase of positive cases in South Carolina, we will continue to provide only emergent and urgent care to Veterans across the entire Columbia VA Health Care System. Our Emergency Department has always remained open 24/7, additionally we are open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm seven days a week at our front entrance for COVID-19 screening and testing for all Veterans.

Universal masking will continue to be used to maximize the safety of everyone that enters any of our facilities for a face to face appointment. We will continue to provide the majority of our appointments virtually through the use of smart phones, computers and tablets; which has become a great method for our staff to work with our Veterans and their families at a distance. Thank you for your patience and understanding. If you need us at any time, we are only a phone call, secure message, or an e-mail away.

Please call Dorn VA Medical Center at 803-776-4000, to make sure the clinic you need is open.

## CARES Act Extends VA Home Loan Pre-Foreclosure Options continued from page 9

*What if I can't afford the higher monthly payments?*  
In this case, VA allows loan modifications. This can offset the size of your monthly payments by extending your loan out beyond your 360-month (30-year) loan, as long as your loan does not exceed 480 months from origination date. Instead of 30 years, your loan term could be 30 years plus 1-month or up to 40 years. Keep in mind, your mortgage note is a legal document that specifically states the date of first payment. Those payments are due on the first of each month, and the maturity date or paid-in-full date of the loan. A VA loan can be repaid early without penalty, but your mortgage note must be legally modified to adjust any of the terms mentioned above.

*What if I don't have a government-backed home loan?* All homeowners can use the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) "Find a Housing Counselor" tool to find counseling agencies approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in your area. You can also call the HOPE™ Hotline, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at (888) 995-HOPE (4673). If your loan is owned by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, other programs may be available. As a homeowner, you can find out if your loan is owned by Fannie Mae by going to <https://www.knowyouroptions.com/covid19assistance> and by Freddie Mac by going to <https://myhome.freddie.com/getting-help/relief-for-homeowners.html>

If you experience any issues with your VA home loan, you can call a VA Regional Loan Center at 1-877-827-3702. We may have additional call volume, so please be patient.

**History of the Redwood National Park  
continued from page 8**

Lack of money has precluded major improvements, however, and timber companies have replanted much of the logged area with non-native tree species. A fire management plan now allows controlled burning as one method to return the parkland to its original state. Since the redwoods were logged on the basis of accessibility, with inaccessible areas being cut last, large old-growth forest sections were isolated from one another, sometimes by many miles. The park has transformed a few logging roads into scenic public drives. These do not meet current safety standards, but funding to improve them is not available at present. Park structures such as visitor centers and employee housing also need updating to meet increasing demands.

Back country camping is by permit only and is only allowed in designated sites. Access to the back country is highly regulated to prevent overuse while permitting as many groups as possible to explore the forest. Almost 200 miles of hiking trails exist in the parks, but during the rainy season some temporary footbridges are removed, as they would be destroyed by high streams. Throughout the year, trails are often wet and hikers need to be well prepared for rainy weather and consult information centers for updates on trail conditions. Horseback riding and mountain biking are popular but are only allowed on certain trails. Kayaking is popular along the seacoast and in the various rivers and streams. The park has three visitor centers, where guided nature walks and general information are available, along with two additional information points. The parks have many picnic areas, which are all easily accessed by vehicle. The best time to visit is summer through October.



## **GRANDPARENTS**

Grandparents are special people with wisdom and pride.

The are always offering love and kindness and are always there to guide.

They often make you feel so confident and strong.

Their arms are always open no matter what you did wrong.

They try to help out in every way that they can.

They love all their grandchildren the same whether you're a child, woman or man.

They are always there to listen and to lend a helping hand,.

They show you respect and they try to understand.

They give their love, devotion and so much more, that's easy to see.

Grandparents, what perfect examples of the kind of person that we should be.



**HAPPY  
GRANDPARENTS  
DAY!!!**





## Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act claims now being determined

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

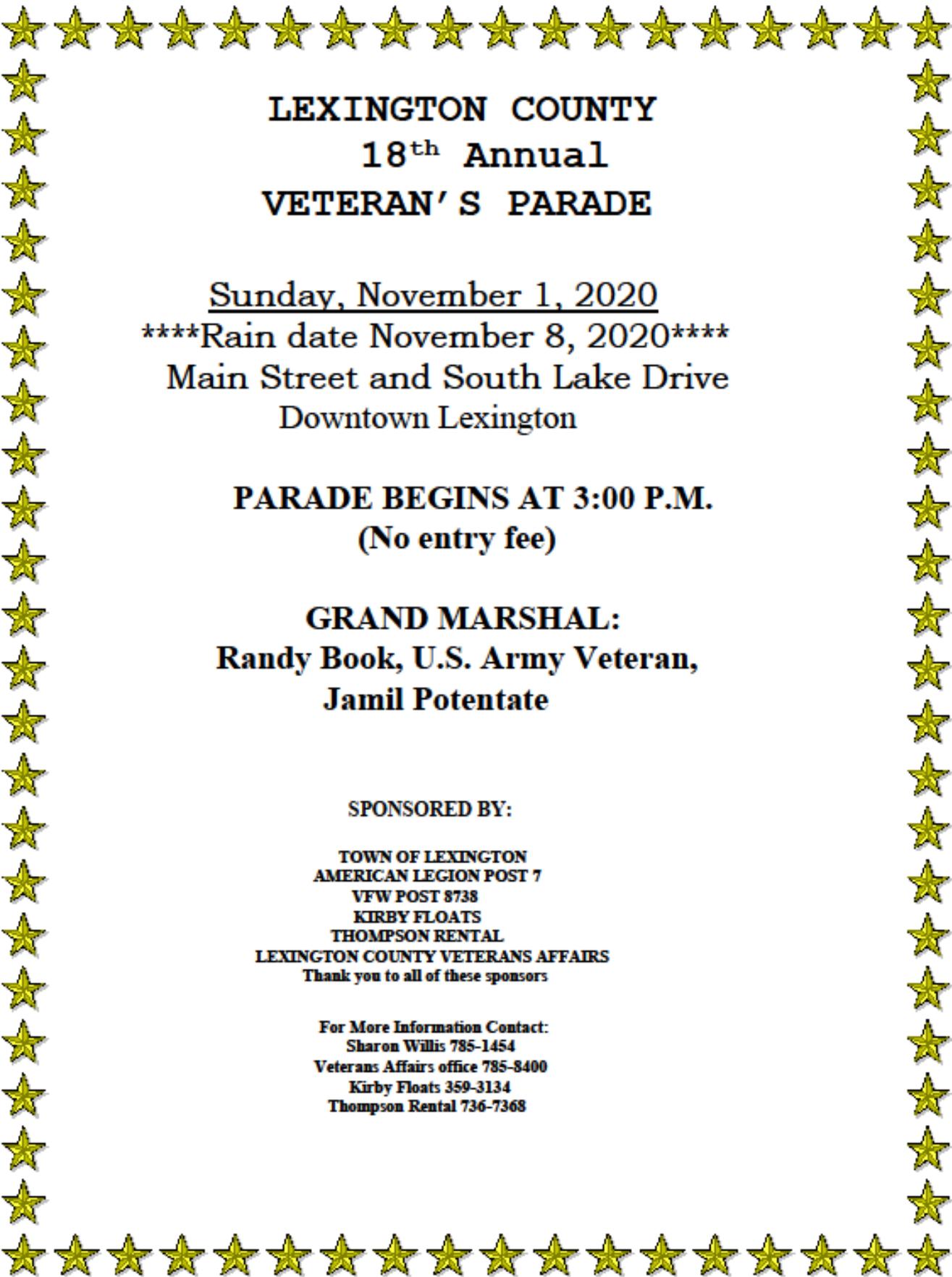
Signed into law June 25, 2019, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served no more than 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between January 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between January 1, 1967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

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

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

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





**LEXINGTON COUNTY**  
**18<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**VETERAN' S PARADE**

Sunday, November 1, 2020

\*\*\*\*Rain date November 8, 2020\*\*\*\*

Main Street and South Lake Drive  
Downtown Lexington

**PARADE BEGINS AT 3:00 P.M.**  
**(No entry fee)**

**GRAND MARSHAL:**  
**Randy Book, U.S. Army Veteran,**  
**Jamil Potentate**

**SPONSORED BY:**

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON**  
**AMERICAN LEGION POST 7**  
**VFW POST 8738**  
**KIRBY FLOATS**  
**THOMPSON RENTAL**  
**LEXINGTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
Thank you to all of these sponsors

**For More Information Contact:**  
**Sharon Willis 785-1454**  
**Veterans Affairs office 785-8400**  
**Kirby Floats 359-3134**  
**Thompson Rental 736-7368**



**2020 Lexington County Veteran's Parade Application**  
**Sunday, November 1st, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Rain date will be Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020**



**NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 23rd, PLEASE**

**(IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE GIVE ME A CALL, EVERYONE IS WELCOME IN THIS PARADE)**

PLEASE DROP OFF ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP AT HAYGOOD STREET AND YOU CAN PARK AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT FOR PICK UP. **PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE UP SPACES AT MCDONALD'S FOR PARKING. THANKS.**

PARADE ROUTE WILL LINE UP AT BUTLER AND HAYGOOD STREET, ENTER MAIN STREET TAKE A LEFT, GO DOWN MAIN STREET, TURN RIGHT ON SOUTH LAKE DRIVE AND THEN LEFT, ENDING AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING PARKING LOT.

Group Name & Entry Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Applications To:  
 Lexington County Veterans Parade  
 Attn: Sharon Willis  
 212 South Lake Drive Ste 302  
 Lexington SC 29072

For More Information Contact:  
 Sharon Willis 803-785-1454  
 Cell # 803-237-9617  
 Fax # 803-785-8300  
 Veterans Affairs office 803-785-8400

**FAX APPLICATIONS TO 803-785-8300**

Applications can be emailed to you also. Contact Sharon at [swillis@lex-co.com](mailto:swillis@lex-co.com)

**I WILL DO MY BEST TO PLACE YOU IN THE LINEUP THAT SHOWCASES YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT. ONCE THE LINE UP FOR THE PARADE HAS BEEN DETERMINED YOU WILL RECEIVE A MAP AND LOCATION FOR YOUR PLACE IN THE PARADE. PLEASE ENTER THE PARADE LINE UP ROUTE AT BUTLER STREET. PLEASE DO NOT ENTER FROM COLUMBIA AVENUE OR MAIN. PLEASE TAKE CAUTION AT THE ONE WAY STREET ON NORTH AND SOUTH CHURCH STREET. TURNING FLOATS AND TRAILORS AROUND IS VERY DIFFICULT. HAYGOOD STREET MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE LINEUP. MAIN STREET WILL BE CLOSED DOWN AT 2:45 SO PLEASE ARRIVE AT YOUR LOCATION BY 2:30. *THANK YOU FOR WANTING TO BE A PART OF THIS PARADE. SHARON***

**ALL OF THE VETERANS APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AND THEY THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

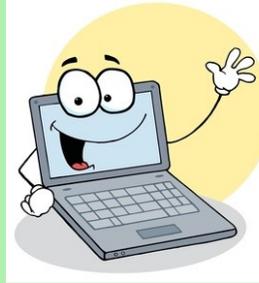
**NEED A FLOAT? CONTACT KIRBY FLOATS @ 803-359-3134. (DISCOUNTS GIVEN TO VETERANS) FOR EVERYONES SAFETY, THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON REQUESTS; PLEASE DO NOT THROW CANDY DURING THE PARADE. IT CAN BE HANDED OUT IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE WALKING WITH YOUR GROUP TO DO THIS. THANK YOU**



**All Lexington County  
Offices will be closed  
on the following  
days:  
**Monday, September  
7th for Labor Day****



Governor Henry McMaster and the SC Department of Administration unveiled the launch of the initial phase of [accelerate.sc.gov](http://accelerate.sc.gov). Designed to provide citizens centralized access to easily connect with COVID-19 related information, this one-stop-shop website will also share details about the state's revitalization efforts. This is a great resource tool for you to share with others.



***DID YOU KNOW...***

Copies of all of our newsletters can be found on the Lexington County website at [lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters](http://lex-co.com/departments/veteransaffairs/newsletters).

The newsletters are listed on the site by year.



**About Our Office  
COVID-19  
Updates**

The County of Lexington officials have reopened portions of 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. Although County staff will work their normal 8am to 5pm schedule, the buildings will only be opened to the public between 9am to 4pm, so that thorough cleaning of public spaces can be conducted.

The VA office hours are from 8am to 5pm and we are open to the public on a limited basis. To comply with State and County social distancing guidelines, walk-ins will not be seen until further notice. Counselors are available to assist with claims and questions via the telephone, email, fax and US mail. Outreach at the libraries has been cancelled until further notice. 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. We are sorry for any inconvenience.



**Housing or Shelter  
Assistance**

Veterans do not need to have an eviction notice to get help.

Those who wish to apply for funding can call the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program at 803-995-8464 (Midlands) or 864-345-1299 (Upstate).

If you are a homeless Veteran or know a homeless Veteran, you can also contact the SSVF Program for possible assistance in obtaining shelter.

**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](http://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov).**

**Website**

## ***Featured Medal:***

# ***Meritorious Service Medal***

The Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) is a military award presented to members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguished themselves by outstanding meritorious achievement or service to the United States subsequent to January 16, 1969. The MSM was previously awarded as a decoration for achievement during peacetime; effective September 11, 2001, this decoration may also be bestowed in lieu of the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement in a designated combat theater. Normally, the acts or services rendered must be comparable to that required for the Legion of Merit but in a duty of lesser, though considerable, responsibility.

An ad hoc committee was formed by the Secretary of Defense to select a name. On November 8, 1968, the committee unanimously approved the name "Meritorious Service Medal". President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Meritorious Service Medal per Executive Order 11448, dated January 16, 1969. The Executive Order was amended by President Ronald Reagan per Executive Order 12312, dated July 2, 1981, to authorize award to members of the armed forces of friendly foreign nations.

The medal was designed by Mr. Jay Morris of the Institute of Heraldry, and the design was approved by the committee on March 20, 1969. The ribbon design purposely follows the colors used for the Legion of Merit to reflect the parallel between the two medals. The eagle, symbol of the United States, stands on laurel branches denoting achievement. The star is used to represent the military service and the rays emanating from there denote the constant efforts of individuals to achieve through excellent and meritorious service.

The Meritorious Service Medal is a bronze medal, 1.5 inches in diameter overall, consisting of six rays issuant from the upper three points of a five-pointed star with beveled edges and containing two smaller stars defined by incised outlines; in front of the lower part of the star an eagle with wings upraised standing upon two upward curving branches of laurel tied with a ribbon between the feet of the eagle. The reverse has the encircled inscriptions "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" and "MERITORIOUS SERVICE". The suspension ribbon is 1 3/8 inches wide and consists of the following stripes: 1/8 inch Crimson 67112; 1/4 inch White 67101; center 5/8 inch Crimson; 1/4 inch White; and 1/8 inch Crimson.



Picture of the  
Medal and  
Ribbon.

***Coming in the Next Issue...***

**Individual Unemployability, Dorn Transportation  
and VA Life Insurance**