

October – November -  
December 2022



## Lexington County Veterans' Affairs Office

“Serving those who served  
and sacrificed for America”



“While I breathe, I hope”

# Lexington County Veterans' News

“Proud to be an American”



The Flag Still Stands for Freedom



As a department in Lexington County government, we value honesty, respect, and service to country, patriotism, sacrifice and personal excellence. We acknowledge, respect and honor all Veterans for their service to America no matter how, when or where they served. We proudly pledge ourselves to creating and maintaining a customer service environment for Veterans and their survivors. We hold ourselves accountable to our customers, partners and each other. We have a passion for Veterans and firmly believe that excellence is not a goal, it is the standard.

# From the Director

## Your VA Office Family

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Welcome to the new and reformatted edition of our office newsletter! We are excited to be back with you and look forward to sharing stories and events along the way. We have all worked hard on it and want to continually improve the newsletter you have come to expect. It will be a quarterly newsletter and published four times per year as we go forward.

This issue brings you up to date and thoroughly explains the PACT ACT, which was signed into law by the President on August 10, 2022. We have been deluged with phone calls and emails about this historic legislation for Veterans. Many have called it the largest bill ever for Veterans and it is packed with law changes that affect millions of Veterans and their surviving spouses. Our office stands ready to answer your questions about this bill the best we can and to help facilitate VA claims for you because of this historic legislation. Please be patient with us because our office is in high demand and our calendars fill up quickly. We are honored to help you with the VA process!

This issue also has information and applications for the Lexington County Veteran's Parade on Sunday, November 6, 2022, at 3pm and the Wreaths Across America event at Fort Jackson National Cemetery on Saturday, December 17, 2022, at noon. Both events are meaningful and usually well attended and we look forward to seeing you there.

We also now prominently feature the Lexington County Veteran's Group, and we will provide their activities, photos and events in each issue. This wonderful group of Veterans are included in our mission statement and are a part of our office family and mean the world to all of us.

Speaking of our office family, since our last issue in 2021, a lot has taken place in the office. We worked as a team to improve our lobby with new ideas for a more patriotic look and now have framed military prints for all branches of military service prominently displayed. We are so proud of each one and it has made a huge impact when Veterans come for an in-person appointment. Some have gotten emotional because it reminded them of their particular service on active duty and some have told us amusing stories of their military service just by looking at these prints. Please stop in and look at these at your convenience and share your thoughts with us.

Other changes in the office involve promotions, a new position and new family members. Jennifer Parler, who began work in our office in 2014 as our Administrative Assistant, has been promoted to the Veterans' Affairs Supervisor position and works directly with me to manage and run the office. She primarily functions as my Assistant Director. Kathy DeBerry, who began work in our office in 2013, has been promoted to our brand-new position, Senior Veterans' Affairs Benefits Counselor. She has the responsibility to train all benefits counselors daily to serve our Veterans and their surviving spouses. Both promotions were earned and deserved and I could not be more proud of both of them. They bring a level of knowledge and experience that places our office on the cutting edge of serving Veterans in South Carolina.

We have two new office family members since our last issue, and they are Christy Rucker and Annastasia Blake. Christy is a new benefits counselor and joined us in March 2022 and Annastasia is our new Administrative Assistant and joined us in August 2022. I am proud to have them on the team and they are doing great work. Please stop in and welcome both of them and to congratulate Jennifer and Kathy. Additionally, we now have six full time positions in our office and we are grateful to County Council for providing a new position that will greatly assist us with the heavy demand for services. This position will be filled shortly and I will talk more about this in our next issue.

We have a lot to be thankful for and since our newsletter is now quarterly, I wish all of you a blessed and Happy Thanksgiving and a blessed and Merry Christmas! We are honored to serve you; our Veterans and we thank God for you and for your service to this great Nation!

Enjoying the journey, Ed Lundeen

# Happy Fall Y'all

## Pumpkin Patches

1. Clinton Sease Farms- 382 Olde Farm Rd. Lexington, SC 29072
2. Fox Farm- 133 Virginia Pine Lane, Lexington, SC 29073
3. SC State Farmers Market- 3483 Charleston Hwy, West Columbia, SC 29172



## SURVIVORS BENEFITS

### Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

A monthly tax-free benefit paid to an eligible surviving spouse, including additional payments for dependent children.

### Survivors' Pension

A monthly income based tax-free payable to an eligible surviving spouse and/or children of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. Based on financial need.

### Dependents' Educational Assistance Program

A benefit that provides assistance to obtain a degree and pursue other eligible education and training to an eligible surviving spouse and/or dependent children.

### Home Loans

A benefit that may be used to help purchase, construct, or improve a home to an eligible surviving spouse.

### Burial

A benefit that includes furnishing a headstone, marker, or medallion, a burial allowance, a Presidential Memorial Cert., and an American flag to drape over the deceased's casket to an eligible veteran.

## 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.

We Will Be **CLOSED!!!**

Veterans Day, Nov. 11th

Thanksgiving, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>  
& 25<sup>th</sup>

Christmas, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>,  
26<sup>th</sup>, & 27<sup>th</sup>.

We hope you have a  
Blessed Holiday Season!

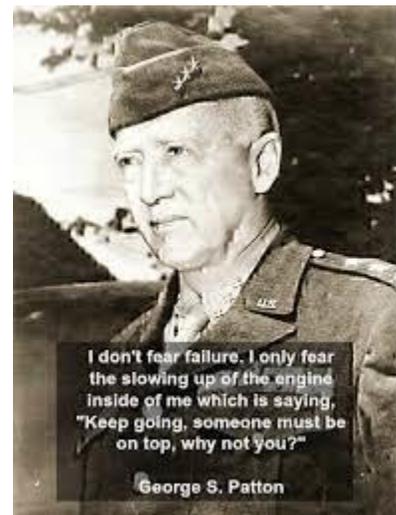
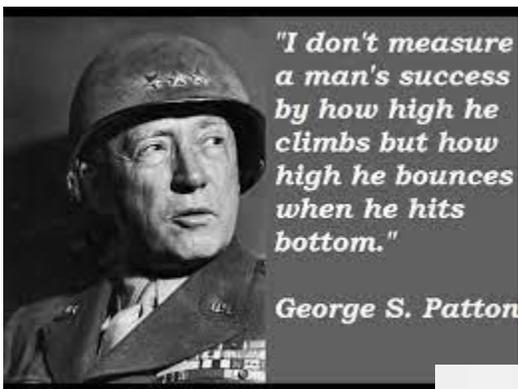
## The PACT Act and your VA benefits

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps the VA provide generations of Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

### The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 eras
- Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps the VA improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you're a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits. To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition. But for some conditions, the VA will automatically assume (or "presume") that your service caused your condition. The VA calls these "presumptive conditions." The VA considers a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation. If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.





# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

## PACT ACT OVERVIEW

### What is the PACT Act? Why is it important?

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for

Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. **This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.**

The Act (1) expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and (2) expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.

### Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our **Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022.**

While some provisions take effect at different times, VA considers the presumptive conditions established in the PACT Act to be applicable on the date the PACT is signed into law. **All Veterans and survivors who believe they may be entitled to benefits are encouraged to apply today.**

- » The Act **expands and extends eligibility for VA health care** for Veterans with toxic-exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
- » **VA will improve the decision-making process** for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.
- » Every enrolled Veteran will receive an initial **toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.
- » VA health care staff and claims processors will receive **toxic exposure-related education and training.**
- » The Act requires **research studies** on mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, Post-9/11 Veteran health trends, and Veteran cancer rates.
- » The Act will help VA **build a stronger, more skilled workforce** to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.
- » The Act authorizes **31 new medical facilities** across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.

## PACT ACT KEY DATES



**AUGUST 10, 2022:**  
PACT Act signed into law.



### EFFECTIVE ON ENACTMENT:

Adds 20+ new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures and more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation.



### OCTOBER 1, 2022:

Presumptions of service connection take effect for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, certain provinces in Cambodia, Guam, or American Samoa (or their territorial waters), or the Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) during specific time periods. Applies for health care eligibility.

**Note:** This will go into effect immediately for eligible Veterans who are terminally ill, homeless, under extreme financial hardship, are over 85 years old, or otherwise can demonstrate sufficient cause.



### OCTOBER 1, 2022 - OCTOBER 1, 2023:

1-year period for care and enrollment for Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after 11/11/98, and who were discharged or released between 9/11/01–10/1/13.



### NOVEMBER 8, 2022:

Begin incorporating toxic exposure screening for enrolled Veterans.



### OCTOBER 1, 2024:

Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released August 2, 1990 - September 11, 2001.



### OCTOBER 1, 2026:

Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released September 12, 2001 - December 31, 2006.



### OCTOBER 1, 2028:

Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2012.



### OCTOBER 1, 2030:

Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2018.



### OCTOBER 1, 2032:

Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Category 3.



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

## PACT ACT OVERVIEW

### What does toxic exposure mean?

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- » **AIR POLLUTANTS:** Burn pits, oil well fires, sulfur fire, sand, dust, and particulates
- » **CHEMICALS:** Agent Orange or other herbicides, burn pits, Camp Lejeune water supplies, pesticides, depleted uranium, chromium, or industrial solvents
- » **RADIATION:** Nuclear weapons testing, x-rays, or depleted uranium
- » **WARFARE AGENTS:** Chemical warfare agents, nerve agents, mustard gas, herbicide tests, and storage
- » **OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS:** Asbestos, lead, fuels, industrial solvents, radiation, vibration, noise, special paint on military vehicles, and some coolants or insulating fluids



## HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

### What are the new health care eligibility criteria?

The PACT Act helps advance a top VA priority: getting more Veterans into VA care by expanding eligibility for, and the availability of, health care services for Veterans. The law **expands health care eligibility** to several groups of Veterans who may not have been eligible before and requires VA to **phase in hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness to three new categories** of Veterans.

- » **CATEGORY 1:** Veterans who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.
- » **CATEGORY 2:** Veterans who were assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) certain locations during specific periods of time:
  - On or after August 2, 1990, in: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates
  - On or after September 11, 2001, in: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country determined relevant by VA.
- » **CATEGORY 3:** Veterans who deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, or Resolute Support Mission.
- » **ON OCTOBER 1, 2022:** Presumptions of service connection take effect for Veterans who served in the **Republic of Vietnam** (from 1/9/62–5/7/75), **Thailand** at any US or Royal Thai base (from 1/9/62–6/30/76), **Laos** (from 12/1/65–9/30/69), certain provinces in **Cambodia** (from 4/16/69–4/30/69), **Guam**, or **American Samoa** or their territorial waters (from 1/9/62–7/31/80), or the **Johnston Atoll** or a ship that called there (from 1/1/72–9/30/77). **This applies for health care eligibility and will go into effect immediately for eligible Veterans who are terminally ill, homeless, under extreme financial hardship, are over 85 years old, or otherwise can demonstrate sufficient cause.**
- » **BETWEEN OCTOBER 1, 2022, AND OCTOBER 1, 2023:** Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war **after the Persian Gulf War** or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may receive care and apply for enrollment for VA health care. Enrollment is free, there are no annual costs, and care may be free as well.



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

## HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

### What is a toxic exposure screening? How will it help Veterans?

Veterans will be **asked questions about potential exposure** to an open burn pit or other hazards and symptoms commonly associated with military environmental exposure. These questions will help VA health care providers individualize health care services **to improve health outcomes and patient experience**. This will also help VA identify other potential risks for Veterans and inform future policy decisions.

### How will a Gulf War or Post-9/11 Combat Veteran's eligibility be impacted?

The PACT Act extends and expands VA health care eligibility. **All Veterans are encouraged to apply for VA healthcare, regardless of separation date.** VA health care eligibility depends on service history and other factors.

Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released:

- » Between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, will have a special enrollment period between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2023 (if not previously enrolled in VA health care). During this one-year period, Veterans will have another opportunity to receive care and apply for enrollment. We strongly encourage them to do so to ensure health care is available now or in the future. Enrollment is free, there are no annual costs, and care may be free as well.
- » After October 1, 2013, are eligible for free VA health care for any condition related to service, and to enroll in VA health care, for up to 10 years from the most recent discharge or separation date.

### What is the Burn Pit Registry? How can a Veteran register?

The [VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) aims to help VA **better understand potential health effects of exposures** and proactively identify health concerns Veterans can discuss with their health care providers for follow-up care.

Veterans deployed to **Southwest Asia or Egypt** after August 2, 1990, or **Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan** on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible to [participate in the registry](#).

Participation is voluntary and **cannot negatively impact VA health care access or compensation and benefits claims**. Exposure to specific airborne hazards or having related health concerns is not required to participate in the registry.

## BENEFITS

### What is a presumption of service connection?

VA assumes certain diseases or illnesses can be related to a Veteran's military service. **Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits and health care services** for these conditions.

### What new or expanded presumptions will the Act create and when will they be in effect?

Veterans and survivors can file claims for all conditions outlined in the PACT Act immediately.

#### For Gulf War and post 9-11 Veterans, that includes:

Brain cancer, Glioblastoma, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Head cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Lymphatic cancer of any type, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Melanoma, Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

#### For Vietnam Veterans and other Veterans exposed to tactical herbicides, that includes two Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), High blood pressure (also called hypertension).

### Can Veterans apply now?

VA is considering the presumptive conditions established in the PACT Act to be applicable on the date the bill becomes law. **We encourage all Veterans who believe they may be entitled to benefits to apply now.**

### What evidence must Veterans submit when filing a claim?

Veterans should submit any supportive evidence along with their claims. The PACT Act states that in processing claims for compensation related to toxic exposure, VA may **consider any Veteran record in an exposure tracking record system**. If no record exists, VA may consider the totality of circumstances. Claims processors can also assist Veterans filing a claim by gathering any identified medical evidence and requesting an examination or medical opinion to substantiate the claim.

Veterans now eligible for benefits based on a presumption of service connection are encouraged to file a claim using [VA Form 21-526EZ](#), Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits, or a supplemental claim using [VA Form 20-0995](#), Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim.



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

## BENEFITS

### If a Veteran was previously denied a claim for any of these conditions, what can they do?

VA will contact Veterans when a presumption of service connection is established or changed. However, Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. **Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new law.**

### What actions should Veterans take who have never filed a claim for one of these conditions?

Veterans who are diagnosed with one of the new presumptive conditions and meet eligibility requirements should **submit a new claim** for consideration using [VA Form 21-526EZ](#), Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.

### Will family members or dependents—those who lost a loved one during the re-adjudication process or those who lost a loved one who was previously denied a claim—receive any benefits because of the PACT Act?

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran **may qualify for various VA benefits** due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. Benefits available include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Accrued, and Burial benefits.

- » **DIC** is a monthly payment for the eligible surviving spouse, dependent child(ren) or parent(s) of a deceased Veteran who died in the line of duty or from a service-connected disability or disabilities. Evidence must show the Veteran's death was caused by, or related to, the Veteran's time in service.
- » **Accrued benefits** are one-time payments to an eligible surviving spouse, dependent child(ren) or dependent parent(s) of a deceased Veteran based on the relationship when the evidence of record shows benefits, such as disability compensation or Veterans pension, were due but unpaid prior to the Veteran's passing. A family member of the deceased Veteran may also qualify by providing evidence of payment for the Veteran's final expenses or burial.

- » **Burial benefits** are a flat-rate payment to assist in covering eligible Veteran burial in a national cemetery and funeral costs. VA may provide burial benefits to a family member or dependent of a deceased Veteran who met the qualifications at the time of their passing. VA pays service-connected burial, non-service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, and transportation reimbursement.
- » **Health care through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)** may also be available for survivors and dependents of Veterans who are now, or who would have been, eligible for a service-connected disability.

### How can a Veteran apply for VA health care?

- Apply online at** [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)
- Call the toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387**  
Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET
- Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits**  
[VA Form 10-10EZ](#)
- Bring a completed, signed** [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

### How can a Veteran file a disability claim?

Veterans who wish to file a claim must complete [VA Form 21-526EZ](#) to apply for benefits and submit any supportive evidence.

Veterans can learn about standard VA disability, supplemental, and secondary claims by visiting:  
[VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file)

**Note:** VA will contact Veterans when a presumption of service connection is established or changed. Most claims previously denied will not automatically be reviewed under the PACT Act, and Veterans who were previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new policies.

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA4111 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)

# The PACT Act for Gulf War era and Post-9/11 Veterans

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

This new law expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. The PACT Act adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures.

## **What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?**

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, the VA will automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. They call these “presumptive conditions.”

The VA will consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

### **These cancers are now presumptive:**

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

### **These illnesses are now presumptive:**

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, the VA has determined that you had exposure to burn pits or other toxins. They call this having a presumption of exposure.

## On or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

Afghanistan  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
Jordan  
Lebanon  
Syria  
Uzbekistan  
Yemen  
The airspace above any of these locations

## On or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

Bahrain  
Iraq  
Kuwait  
Oman  
Qatar  
Saudi Arabia  
Somalia  
The United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
The airspace above any of these locations

The VA is encouraging all Veterans and survivors to file for benefits now. The VA will start to process PACT Act-related benefits in January 2023. They must wait for funding approval from Congress and put the needed systems in place before they can process these claims.

If you apply for benefits at any time in the next year and the VA grants your application, they will likely backdate your benefits to the date of the bill signing. This means they will pay you the amount you would have received from August 10, 2022, to the date they grant your application.

## VA health care as a post-9/11 combat Veteran

The VA is extending and expanding VA health care eligibility based on the PACT Act. They are **encouraging you to apply, no matter your separation date**. Your eligibility depends on your service history and other factors.

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can get free VA health care for any condition related to your service for up to 10 years from the date of your most recent discharge or separation. You can also enroll at any time during this period and get any care you need, but you may owe a copay for some care.

**At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:**

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

**And this must be true for you:**

- You were discharged or released on or after October 1, 2013

They encourage you to enroll now so they can provide any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free.

**What if I was discharged or released before October 1, 2013?**

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can receive care and enroll during a special enrollment period between **October 1, 2022**, and **October 1, 2023**.

**At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:**

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

**And both of these must be true for you:**

- You were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, **and**
- You haven't enrolled in VA health care before

The VA encourages you to apply during this 1-year period so they can provide you with any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free. And your care may be free as well.



The email for Veterans to comment on their experience with their C&P exam is [contractexam.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:contractexam.vbavaco@va.gov).



## Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty:

- While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
- While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
- While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

There are three distinct versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard).





**2022 Lexington County Veteran's Parade Application**

**Sunday, November 6th, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Rain date will be Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**NO ENTRY FEE, SIGN UP DUE BY OCTOBER 21st, 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.**

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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**



# WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and others who had helped with their annual Christmas wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America™, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. This nonprofit organization continues the Arlington tradition as part of its mission to Remember, Honor and teach.

In 2021, Wreaths Across America and our national network of volunteers laid over 2,400,000 memorial wreaths at nearly 3000 locations in the United States and beyond. We accomplished this with help from over 4000 fundraising groups, many corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. Our annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery is known as the world's largest veteran's parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veteran's homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.

## Schedule of Events

Sunday, December 11, 2022

Start of World's Longest Veterans Parade from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery and participating locations

Monday, December 12, 2022 12:00 Noon at the SC Veterans Memorial

Located on the Assembly Street side of the Statehouse grounds

There will be State House wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and Puerto Rico

Saturday December 17, 2022 12:00 Noon

Fort Jackson National Cemetery 4170 Percival Rd. Columbia, SC 29229

Parking will be at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking lot across from the cemetery. We will have shuttle buses to bring you to and from the cemetery starting at 10:30am the morning of the ceremony. There will be limited handicap parking in cemetery with proper identification.

**For more information email [waftjackson@gmail.com](mailto:waftjackson@gmail.com), or call Carol Davis (803) 467-4482**

Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and **no** wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.



# WREATHS *across* AMERICA

## 2022

### Fort Jackson National Cemetery 3 for 2 Wreath Sponsorship Form

\*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at State, National veteran’s cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December.

Wreaths may be purchased online at <https://Wreathscrossamerica.org/SC0015> Please use Cemetery Code SCFJNC and Org. Code SC0015

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please make checks payable to:

**Wreaths Across America TM**

PO Box 3356  
West Columbia, SC 29171

### FORT JACKSON NATIONAL CEMETERY 3 FOR 2

YOU CAN ORDER BY CREDIT CARD FROM OUR WEB PAGE AT <https://wreathscrossamerica.org/SC0015>

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
<b>Individual</b> = 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
<b>Mailed "In Honor" card</b> = If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
<b>Family</b> = 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
<b>Small Business</b> = 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
<b>Corporate</b> = 100 Wreaths	\$1,500.00		
		<b>Grand Total</b>	

**\*\*SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS\*\***

**In Honor of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide email of "In Honor Of" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (if you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

**Email:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing:**

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

**Branch of Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rank:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_

Proceeds place a wreath at one of the participating cemeteries; help support our fundraising partners, educational and Veteran's services outreach. Please note that **all sponsorships are sent directly to the location and no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.**

We welcome all to join us at any Wreaths Across America ceremony. If you would like to participate or help bring sponsored wreaths to your local community, please contact us and we will help connect you with other groups already working in your area.



The Lexington County Parks Department is making sure the Veterans Memorial has a fresh coat of paint before the upcoming Veterans Day parade!



Ed Lundeen will be at the libraries below:

Gaston library – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month between 10am – 12pm

Chapin library – 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month between 10am – 12pm

Cayce library – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month between 10am and 12pm

Batesburg library – 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month between 10am – 12pm

**2022 SNOWBALL FESTIVAL**  
AT ICEHOUSE AMPHITHEATER

**Thursday, December 1**  
4-8pm - Christmas Craft Fair

**Friday, December 2**  
4-8pm - Christmas Craft Fair  
6:30pm - Carolighting Ceremony  
7:30pm - Polar Express Movie Night (G)

**Saturday, December 3**  
1-5pm - Carnival  
6pm - Elf Movie Night (PG)

**Sunday, December 4**  
3pm - Christmas Parade

TOWN OF Lexington  
SNOWBALL FESTIVAL

# Lexington County Veterans Group

## Summary of Activities

### January thru September 2022

#### Places & Events:

1. Visited VFW Post 6740 to help celebrate Memorial Day and one of their members 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. We were interviewed for TV that evening by WLTX.
2. At the personal invitation of BG Michaelis, we attended a recruit graduation (in reserved seats with spouses invited), toured Ft. Jackson, including the excellent Ft Jackson Military Museum. We wrapped up our day eating lunch in the Drill Instructor's Dining Facility.
3. Thanks to one of our members, we are having periodic fund-raising raffles, to benefit our group.
4. Ten members received "Quilts of Valor" and, in celebration, we had an in-house sponsored, wonderful dinner organized by John Hosey, Rich Little and our spouses.
5. We celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and are the longest lasting group of our type in South Carolina.
6. Mike Egan and Rod Pimental were each honored, at separate Blowfish baseball games.
7. Veterans-directed lessons, most weeks, by Larue Bettis, our official, state approved, licensed sociologist but especially when no outside guests are scheduled.



## Guest Speakers

1. Ed Lundeen briefed/up-dated us periodically on VA matters.
2. Sheriff Jay Koon, Lexington County Sheriff, briefed us on policing and crime in the county.
3. LTC (Ret) Mike Harvey, expert on Medical Marijuana, brought us up-to-date on the subject.
4. Attorney GC Reynolds discussed Wills, Powers of Attorney and Estate planning to members and spouses.
5. Brig. General Patrick Michaelis, Commanding Officer of Ft. Jackson & Bonnie (his spouse) detailed his 30-year career and many general Army and Ft. Jackson topics.
6. Ken Howell, Korean era AF vet, highlighted the research concerning “G suits” which became standard for pilots.
7. Jerry Foster briefed us on Dyslexia which was barely known when he was attempting to enlist in the Navy and how he overcame obstacles. He also addressed a number of other health issues.
8. Ms. Jerri Williams briefed us on current VA topics.

## Future Planned Events:

1. Ed Lundeen: Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, Survivors Benefits – Spouses invited.
2. Charles T. Young, flew **50** F-16 missions during Desert Storm.
3. Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, Lexington Town Memorial Day Parade. We’ll have a float.
4. Group Christmas Party. Details TBA.



All Lexington County Veterans are cordially invited to attend the weekly meeting. The group meets on Tuesdays from 10am-12pm at The American Legion Post 7. The address is 200 American Legion Drive (off Harmon St.) Lexington, SC 29072



Ed

Jennifer

Kathy

Christy

Annastasia



Merry Christmas