



Serving Those Who Served

# Lancaster County veteran News

Issue 53

May 2016

## Memorial Day Ceremony

Memorial Park, Lancaster SC

Memorial Day is officially celebrated on the last Monday during the month of May. Memorial Day is dedicated to service men and women who gave their lives for freedom and country. It is also a time to remember loved ones who have passed away. The roots of Memorial Day go back to 1865 and the end of the Civil War. Memorial Day was traditionally held on the 30th of May. In 1971, Congress changed it to the last Monday of the month in order to afford a three day holiday weekend.

We invite you to the Memorial Day Ceremony at Memorial Park on May 29, 2016 at 3:00pm, while we honor our fallen soldiers.



## Calendar of Events:

- May 2 — SC POW Medal Ceremony 6:00
- May 2 — American Legion meeting @ 7:00
- May 3 — Fort Lawn Veteran Service Grp
- May 9 — DAV meeting @ 7:00pm
- May 28 — IL VFW meeting @9:30am
- May 28 — American Legion Free Breakfast
- May 29 — Memorial Day Program
- May 30 — Memorial Day—office closed
- May 31 — MCL meeting

We have on site every Wednesday a VetCenter Counselor and every Thursday a SCWorks representative.

## Contact Us:

Lancaster County VA  
 1033 West Meeting St  
 PO Box 1809  
 Lancaster SC 29721  
 Phone: 803-283-2469  
 Phone: 803-416-9497  
 VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net

## Lawyers 4 Vets

For low income veterans

Lawyers 4 Vets connects lower-income Veterans living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines with local attorneys who provide one-on-one pro bono legal advice or representation. Beginning May 15, 2014, Lawyers 4 Vets will assist Veterans by appointment only with:

- ◆ Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina ID, birth certificates)
- ◆ Child support and visitation issues in South Carolina
- ◆ Expungements and pardons in South Carolina
- ◆ Consumer protection
- ◆ Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney

Veterans seeking information about the clinic should call 1-877-289-6000.

## Free counseling for war time veterans VetCenter

A counselor from the Vet Center is available twice a month in Lancaster for war time veterans and their dependents. The Vet Center offers a wide range of services to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian life. You have earned these benefits and there is no cost to you or your family members.

- Individual & group Counseling
- Family Counseling for military related
- Bereavement counseling for families
- Military sexual trauma
- Outreach & education
- Substance abuse assessment & referral
- Employment assessment & referral
- VBA benefits explanation & referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues



## DAV AIRSHOW

Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

Come on OUT! Saturday, May 21 & Sunday May 22, 2016.

The DAV Airshow Outreach Program was developed to increase public awareness of disabled veterans and to serve veterans in communities across the nation. Using two B-25 medium bombers, the program reminds the public of the sacrifices veterans have made and continue to make to keep our nation free.

The B-25J "Panchito," named after the feisty rooster from Disney's animated musical *The Three Caballeros*, was a bomber with the 396th Bomb Squadron, 41st Bomb Group, 7th Air Force, station in the Central Pacific. After several attacks on various Japanese strongholds in Southern Japan as well as Japanese help Eastern China, she was scheduled for another bombing run to Japan in the day the Japanese surrendered.

The Panchito will be at the Shaw Air Expo at Shaw AFB May 21-22.

## Beware of VA Pension Scams

Be on the Look Out!

Beware of pension advance products that offer to pay military retirees a lump-sum payout in return for their monthly retirement payments. The products may amount to payment of only pennies on the dollar and the advances are reported to carry interest rates from 27 percent to 106 percent, which can threaten a safe retirement.

There are many pension advance companies on the Internet, often with patriotic-sounding names and logos. If you're offered a pension advance, stay away from arrangements that allow a creditor to access the account where you get your benefits. Instead, get trusted financial expert advice if you need emergency funds.

Additionally, some individuals and companies use VA's Aid & Attendance pension benefits as a hook to sell service. The Aid & Attendance benefit is for eligible disabled veterans who require the aid and attendance of another person, or who are housebound. Individuals or companies looking to sell their services may offer to help veterans obtain Aid & Attendance benefits, but they often require customers to sign up for financial services first, then they move assets into irrevocable trusts for qualification.

When being solicited, watch out for:

- A lawyer or veteran adviser who offers to get the Aid & Attendance benefit for a fee. Federal law prohibits VA accredited advisers from charging to assist with VA claims. However, at times a "consultation fee" is charged up front.
- A claim from a paid adviser stating that he or she can get the benefit for you more quickly than anyone else. All VA claims must go through the standard evaluation process, which no one can bypass to get it done faster.
- An offer to help financially secured veterans qualify for Aid & Attendance by taking control of their finances and moving assets into inaccessible trusts. This may disqualify a veteran from other benefits.

Retirement homes using the lure of Aid & Attendance to get veterans to move in on the implied promise that they will get the benefit. If the claim is denied, the veteran may not be able to afford to remain in the facility.

(Source: *The American Legion Dispatch*, April 2014)



# LARS Program

Now available for Local Veterans

Our office has partnered with the following Veterans Service Organizations; The American Legion Post 31 and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 14, to provide free transportation to veterans in need.

At this time these organizations have purchased prepaid tickets that can be used for local trips only (grocery store, bank, local private doctor, etc.).

### How to use this benefit?

You will need to contact our office at 803.283.2469 to obtain a ticket or two depending on if you need a round trip. These tickets do not expire. You will then have to call LARS at 803.285.6956 to schedule your reservation on their vehicle.

We do have a limited quantity of tickets and they will be issued on a first come first serve basis.

## Charlotte VA Health Care Clinic

Opens in April 2016

3506 W. Tyvola Rd, Charlotte NC 28208

#### Services that will be provided in April:

Audiology	Primary Care
Endoscopy	Rotating Medical and Surgical Clinics
Imaging	Pharmacy
Laboratory	Primary Care
Mental Health	Primary Care
Minor Procedures	
Optometry	

#### Future Services:

Day Surgery
Dental Clinic
Dialysis
Infusion Clinic
Rehab Medicine

## Lancaster DAV Van Schedule for May 2016:

### Columbia:

Wednesday, May 4  
 Thursday, May 5  
 Wednesday, May 11  
 Thursday, May 12  
 Wednesday, May 18  
 Thursday, May 19  
 Wednesday, May 25  
 Thursday, May 26

### Rock Hill:

Friday, May 6  
 Friday, May 13  
 Friday, May 20  
 Friday, May 27

Please note that these dates may be subject to change due to volunteer driver availability.

## SC Works - Veterans Services

Do you fall in one of the following categories?

- A veteran with a service connected disability (have a percentage from VA)
- A veteran that is homeless or feel that you may be homeless
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or GED
- A veteran who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months
- A recently separated service member who has been unemployed for 27 weeks or more in the last 12 months or 18 to 24 years old

#### One on One Case Management and Individual Employment Plan

- Career/job counseling, local labor market information on jobs and employers in the area
- One on one assistance in tailoring resumes for area jobs
- Help with expanding your job search area and how to search
- Providing referral for jobs, family support, social service, and other community programs

If you would like to make an appointment to meet with a member of the SC Works Staff just call 803-313-7385 or come into a SC Works Office.

Michael E O'Donnell

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative  
 SC Department of Employment and Workforce—Veteran Services SC Works  
 803-313-7385—Lancaster  
 803-328-3881 Ext 110 — Rock Hill  
[modonnell@dew.sc.gov](mailto:modonnell@dew.sc.gov)

## SC Works

Are you work ready? Contact Lynda!

Lynda Burke

Veterans Coordinator Catawba/LVER  
 SCDEW/SCWORKS  
 705 North White Street  
 Lancaster SC 29720  
 803-313-7388 (work)  
 803-287-5930 (cell)  
[lburke@dew.sc.gov](mailto:lburke@dew.sc.gov)

## SC National Guard

Service Member and Family Care

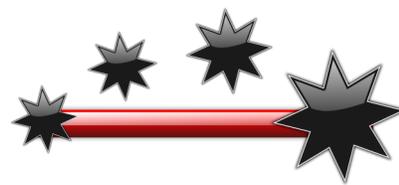
Brad M. Ware is the Employment Advisor with the SC National Guard.

You may contact him at:  
 National Guard Armory  
 126 Airport Road  
 Rock Hill, SC 29732  
 Cell—803-288-2635

Email—[Brad.m.ware.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:Brad.m.ware.ctr@mail.mil)

# Meet Hillary Collins

Highlighting Lancaster County Veterans—One at a time



Hillary Collins proudly served in the US Army from February 2005 to November 2012. Hillary grew up in Lancaster but moved around

with her parents who were missionary's for 10 years. She returned to Lancaster and graduated from Ft Mill High School.

"As a child, I remember watching the September 11th crisis unfold on TV and I remember just knowing that this was something that I wanted to help with", Hillary stated. She comes from a strong military family with her father serving in the USAF, a grandpa served as a CB, another grandpa also serving in the USAF, along with cousins that served in the USAF, USMC and USA.

She joined the USA in Rock Hill, SC and has served two tours in Iraq with a MOS in Aviation. During her first deployment she was a lead radio telephone operator for her shift. "We would have a lot of air traffic at night due to too much visibility during the day. I became known as the singing RTO. I did this to keep up the morale and to keep it from being monotonous. What we were doing here was very important and everyone needed to stay alert, this was one way I thought helped

lighten the mood and to keep them sharp. We would have other units fly in with supplies and they would ask for a song when entering our air space. I would sing whatever song would pop into my head", Hillary said smiling. She was part of the last combat brigade to leave Iraq. "We set the Iraqis up for success and any other units that came after us were there just for support", stated Hillary.

While on active duty she met and married her Husband John Collins. John, native of Georgia, was in the last combat vehicle to cross the border from Iraq into Kuwait. They currently live in Indian Land and have two pets - a German Shepard named Thor, and Bear, a Border Collie. She currently manages the CrossRidge Café full time in Indian Land. "Every Tuesday morning at the café veterans meet at 8:00am for coffee and fellowship. All veterans are welcome to join us. It is nice to be able to talk freely to other veterans. It is comforting knowing that we completely understand each other without having to explain anything. Listening to the older generation veter-

ans talking about their time in service, you can relate no matter how unique there situation because we all had the same goal." Hillary stated.

Since she was discharged in Ft. Lewis Washington, she has become very active in our community. She has become



a member of IL-VFW Post 12136 and a member of DAV Chapter 14 here in Lancaster. Currently she is serving as the Junior Vice Commander with IL-VFW Post 12136 and has been elected to serve as Senior Vice Commander when the new term starts.

Hillary's words of wisdom; "In my opinion there needs to be an instilment of patriotism back in our country and being in the military is a great way to do this. Being in the military or supporting someone who is or was in the military is a great way to develop the discipline and patriotism that this country needs."

## Critical Home Repair Program

Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County has now received a grant for critical home repair for veterans and the elderly. If you are interested in more information or want an application please contact our office.

You can also call 803-283-1203 to speak to someone with Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County. There are certain eligibility criteria that will need to be met.

## Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to 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 will be deposited. If you are changing direct deposit you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.

## The American Legion

Annual Breakfast  
Free to all Veterans, EMS,  
Fire Fighters, and  
Police Officers.  
May 28, 2016  
American Legion  
8am to 10am

The American Legion Supported Passage of the Veterans Accountability Act as a temporary fix to help veterans get the health care they need. The Legion supports a strong VA that ultimately relies less and less on outside care, rather than move toward vouchers and

## Disabled American Veterans

We are very active in helping local veterans. Since July 2015 the DAV has spent over \$2200.00 helping veterans ranging from motel rooms for homeless veterans, to picking up and delivering medications. We have donated wheel chairs, walkers, crutches and batteries for electric wheel chairs. We work closely with Lancaster VA office and have supplied LARS tickets for veterans to use that services. Please all members come to the meetings—there is no limit what we can accomplish. Hopefully we can be more productive in 2016! Next Meeting April 11 at 7:00pm.

## Fort Lawn Veteran Service Group

Open to all Veterans who want to attend. We meet at the Fort Lawn Community Center the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. The address is 5554 Main St, Fort Lawn, SC 29714. If you need more information please contact Jim Gladden at 803-320-3537 or Lynda Burke at 803-287-5930.

## Marine Corps League

The Lancaster County Leather-necks—Detachment 1169 — Marine Corps League meets the last Tuesday of each month in our building at 347 Brooklyn Ave at 7:00pm. We welcome all Marines and FMF Corpsmen to join with us.

Billy Helms, Commandant

## Veterans of Foreign War

We meet the first Thursday of every month at The American Legion. This meeting is held at 7:00pm. We would love to see all members attend these meeting. If you are interested in becoming a member please contact Tim Catoe, Quartermaster for VFW Post 5936, at 803-285-7199 or 803-320-4675. You can also email him at [tim.catoe@comporium.com](mailto:tim.catoe@comporium.com)

## Veterans of Foreign War

Indian Land Post 12136

Next meeting is 4th Saturday of the month at 9:30am.  
Location: 8083 Charlotte Hwy, Indian Land, SC 29707  
Additional Information can be found on our following websites:  
[Www.indianlandvfw.org](http://www.indianlandvfw.org) or [www.facebook.com/indianlandvfw.com](http://www.facebook.com/indianlandvfw.com)  
Feel free to contact John Marker—Ph: 704.843.6930



The U.S. Department of Treasury, in partnership with the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority and SC Housing Corp., has made over \$295 million available to help eligible South Carolina homeowners avoid serious first mortgage delinquency and foreclosures.

### Qualifications

SC Help is intended to assist borrowers who are facing first mortgage delinquency or possible foreclosure. There is no household income limit, the property must be an owner-occupied primary residence, applicants must have a minimum 24 months homeownership history and applicants do NOT have to be delinquent.

### How to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to apply electronically at: [www.schelp.com](http://www.schelp.com). Applicants without the internet may call 1-855-435-7472, toll free number for assistance. There is NO FEE required at any point during the SC HELP process. Once you have made an appointment with a representative you can meet at the SC Works office on White St, Lancaster.

## Check Your Rep

How can you check if your representative is accredited with the Office of General Counsel? Just follow these simple steps to check to make sure you are working with an accredited representative:

1. Go to <http://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
2. You choose between attorney, claims agent or VSO representative
3. Enter in Last Name and State
4. Click Search
5. Click on your representatives name
6. A list will display showing all accreditations that person has.

\*\*\*If your representative is not listed then they are not accredited with a veterans service organization\*\*\*

## About Our Office

This Office is employed by Lancaster County not the VA. The Lancaster County Veterans Affairs Office is an advocate for veterans and/or their surviving dependents to provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Hospitals. The Veterans Affairs Office assists former and present members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: Service-Connected disability and Non-Service Connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits.

## DAV Van

\*\*Due to low volunteer drivers we will only go 3 days a week.\*\*

If you need to schedule a ride on our DAV van please call 803-283-2469. Currently we are scheduled to go to Columbia on Wednesdays & Thursdays and Rock Hill on Fridays. Please note that we will need a 48 hour notice for you to be scheduled to ride this van. We only pick up veterans if you live on the way to Columbia or Rock Hill. We can only pick up riders that do not have any other way to meet here in the parking lot. We have to coordinate with volunteer drivers.

Want to receive this newsletter by email? Contact  
VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net to  
be put on the mailing list.



## Office Staff

### Robin Ghent

- Veteran Affairs Director, Lancaster County
- President, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)
- Board member for South Carolina Veteran Advocacy Council
- Board member for South Carolina Veterans Trust Fund
- Legislative Committee member for National Association County Veterans Service Officers

#### Accredited with:

1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veteran Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
6. Vietnam Veterans of America
7. Retired Enlisted Association

\*\*Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

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### Beth Raffaldt

- Deputy Director Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County
- Public Relations Chairperson, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)

#### Accredited with:

1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Vietnam Veterans of America
6. Retired Enlisted Association
7. Military Order of the Purple Heart

\*\*Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

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### Tiffany King

- Secretary/DAV Van Coordinator for Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County

#### Accredited with:

1. The American Legion