



**Department of
South Carolina
The American Legion**

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SOUTH CAROLINA NEWS LINE

Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.

Reminder

Just a reminder that the Headquarters Office will be closed from 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 27 to 8:30 a.m. Monday July 7. I will be checking my email often so any inquiries can be sent via email and I should be able to answer them shortly after you send it. Thank you and please take care. That also means no News Line for July 3. The next issue will be July 10.

Vietnam Era Vets

Senator Tim Scott is hosting a Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Ceremony scheduled for Saturday August 2nd. The Senator is honored to have the opportunity to express our gratitude to these Vietnam War Era veterans and will present each one with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition and a pin.

We scheduled the event in a central location - downtown Columbia. At 10 AM on August 2nd, we will be recognizing these brave men and women at the First Baptist Church of Columbia, at 1306 Hampton Street. We are enlisting your help to spread the word about this event within your organization and throughout the community. This Recognition Ceremony cannot be a success without the involvement of our Veteran partner organizations. There is no fee to participate in or attend this event. We do ask these veterans and the surviving families of deceased veterans to contact us to register. You can do this online at: <http://scott.senate.gov/veterans> <https://outreach.senate.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=quorum_scott-iq&crop=14308.6409133.5232973.7131919&redirect=http%3a%2f%2fwww.scott.senate.gov%2fveterans> or by phone, at 844-820-0146 (toll free). The Vietnam War era was one of the most challenging in our nation's history, and it is truly my honor to host these brave men and women who fought for freedom this year. Their sacrifices, as well as those made by their families, will never be forgotten.

Thank you for your support of our Veterans and the Vietnam War Era Veterans Recognition Ceremony. I hope to see you and your fellow veterans in Columbia on August 2nd!

RSVP Request

I recently was contacted by Ms. Beverly Brandt, Director, RSVP of the Midlands inquiring about veterans volunteering to assist in various avenues for seniors 55 and older. There are many areas that RSVP could use the assistance in and the only requirement is that the individual be 55 and older and have the time to do so. Anyone interested can either contact Ms. Brandt at 803-252-7734 ext. 246 or go to the following website www.seniorresourcesinc.org and check things out. Some of the many avenues are School volunteer Liaison, Receptionist, Armed Forces Casework Family Follow-up Volunteer, Library Assistant, Clerical Assistant, Women's Clinic.

VA News

Even when acknowledging serious mistakes, Veterans Affairs officials routinely downplay the severity of errors and the harm caused to veterans, according to a new investigation by the Office of Special Counsel released Monday. Officials there said the consistent "harmless error" defense often defies logic and hides "the severity of systemic and longstanding problems." They're asking for the creation of a new high-level post to better respond to outside criticism of the agency, to ensure problems are being addressed. In response, acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson announced a new review of the department's Office of Medical Inspector, including a closer look at whether past special counsel recommendations have been implemented. "I am deeply disappointed not only in the substantiation of allegations raised by whistleblowers, but also in the failures within VA to take whistleblower complaints seriously," he said in a statement. Last week, Gibson sent a department wide memo condemning retaliation against whistleblowers and encouraging VA employees to report any wrongdoing or waste.

In a letter to the White House on Monday, OSC officials praised that message, but said the department has a long way to go before it adequately responds to those whistleblower reports. The office has 50 pending disclosure cases alleging threats to VA patient health and safety, and another 60 cases of alleged retaliation against whistleblowers in the department. In one case, VA medical inspectors acknowledged that 3,000 veterans at a Colorado VA facility could not reschedule canceled appointments but found "no danger to public health and safety" as a result. OSC investigators said they found similar problems in Alabama, where a VA pulmonologist improperly recorded information for 1,200 patients. VA medical inspectors said they could not substantiate whether those mistakes endangered patient health.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, R-Fla., called the findings infuriating. "In the fantasy land inhabited by VA's Office of the Medical Inspector, serious patient safety issues apparently have no impact on patient safety," he said in a statement. "It's impossible to solve problems by whitewashing them or denying they exist." OSC officials said problems at VA facilities now make up about one-fourth of all the government cases they are investigating. (AS REPORTED IN THE *MARINE CORPS TIMES*)

Legislative News

Legislative staff is working in conjunction with staff from the Media and Communications division to develop educational materials for Legislative Council members and other Legionnaires to maximize effectiveness in grassroots efforts with members of Congress. The educational materials will help explain the legislative process from start to finish, and where veterans can use their voice to greatest effect.

Letter of Support

The American Legion on June 17 sent a letter of support to Sen. Tim Kaine (VA) stating our organization's support for legislation entitled the *Post 9/11 Welcome Home Resolution*. This resolution would recognize Veterans Day 2014 as a special "Welcome Home Commemoration for all Americans who have served in the military since September of 2001.

Flag Amendment

On May 22, 2013, **House Joint Resolution (H.J. Res.) 47** was introduced by Rep. Spencer Bachus (AL). This legislation is a proposed constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. Its text states simply: "*The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.*" The measure currently has 29 cosponsors. On June 13, 2013, Sen. Orrin Hatch (UT) introduced **Senate Joint Resolution (S.J. Res.) 17**, a companion bill to H.J. Res. 47. This measure has 23 cosponsors.

The task before us now is finding additional cosponsors for these two measures. Please contact your representative and senators, and ask them to become cosponsors of the flag amendment in their respective chambers. [Resolution 272-2012]

Pro Bono Info

Lawyers4Vets - Monthly Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic

Introduction: As a service to area Veterans, the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center has partnered with the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and members of the private bar to establish Lawyers 4 Vets, a Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic.

Purpose:

Lawyers 4 Vets connects low income and homeless Veterans with attorneys who provide legal advice and representation on certain issues.

Legal Issues and Services: The clinic will ONLY address the following topics:

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

Eligibility:

Veterans will be screened for eligibility, and if eligible will be given an appointment at the clinic. Lawyers 4 Vets will assist eligible Veterans regardless of military discharge status.

Appointments: Veterans who would like to be screened for eligibility should call the number listed below and leave a message including their name, phone number, and legal issue. The Veteran will be contacted within 2 business days by an intake volunteer who will ask the veteran a number of questions to determine if they are eligible. If the Veteran is eligible and has a qualifying legal issue, they will be given the next available appointment at the legal clinic. Appointments are required for a Veteran to receive a face-to-face meeting with a lawyer. Walk-ins will not be seen and will be directed to contact the telephone intake.

Number to call: Toll Free 1-877-289-6000

Clinic Dates: The Clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The 2014 Clinic dates are:

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| * May 15, 2014 | *June 19, 2014 |
| * July 17, 2014 | *August 21, 2014 |
| * September 18, 2014 | *October 16, 2014 |
| * November 20, 2014 | *December 18, 2014 |

Where: (BY APPROVED APPOINTMENT ONLY AND SPECIFIC LOCATION PROVIDED UPON CONFIRMATION): Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia SC 29209.

What's Happening

June 27, Friday – Graduation, Law Cadet Program, 10 a.m. SC Fire Academy.

June 27, Friday – July 7, Monday – Office closed will reopen for business **8:30 a.m. 7/7/14**

July 4, Friday – Independence Day

July 19, Saturday – District 18 Florence Post #1 12noon

Post Officer Listings

District and Post Commanders Please Note: Even though you may have the same officers in the same positions for the 2014-2015 year, you should also submit a listing to department. Also, for those that have email addresses, please indicate that on the listing. Your assistance and attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated. The following is a listing of the posts. If they are in your district, please contact them and request they submit the information as soon as possible.

Proud To Serve

Lloyd H. Woods
Department Adjutant