



Department of South Carolina The American Legion

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SOUTH CAROLINA NEWS LINE

Never take a person's dignity; it means the world to them and nothing to you.

Patriots Point

AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall will be at Patriots Point from October 9-12th in the Grove, landside of the USS Yorktown. Opening ceremony in the evening of October 9th. An 80% replica Vietnam Wall will be coming to Patriots Point in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War and ongoing commemoration programs. For volunteer opportunities, please contact Bobby Kotlowski (843)881-5989 or bkotlowski@patriotspoint.org.

The largest traveling replica of the iconic Vietnam Memorial Wall will be on display at the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime museum Oct. 9-12. The 360-foot long, eight-foot tall American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) Wall is 80 percent scale of the memorial in Washington D.C. It contains the names of every one of the 58,272 men and women who died in the more than decade long war. "We are honored to offer our community a special chance to pay tribute to the fallen heroes of the Vietnam War," said Patriots Point Executive Director Mac Burdette. "This will be a very special event for countless people across our state. It creates an opportunity for those who cannot travel to our nation's capital to feel the emotions and connection with their lost friends and loved ones that is only attained through viewing the famous memorial."

A special opening ceremony is planned for the evening of Oct. 9. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will include Medal of Honor Recipient Maj. Gen. James E. Livingston, several state and local officials and a performance by the US Marine Corps Band at Parris Island.

The Traveling Wall will be free and available to visitors around the clock from 5:00 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 9 to 12:00 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 12 in the Grove at Patriots Point. Rubbing sheets and pencils will be provided. Normal admission rates will apply to those who also want to tour the museum. This event is part of the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum's ongoing efforts to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War over the next few years.

WWI Memorial Lawsuit

On September 19, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland granted the motion by The American Legion, The American Legion Department of Maryland, and The American Legion Post 131 of Colmar Manor, Maryland, to intervene in a lawsuit that challenges the constitutionality of a veterans memorial

that sits in Bladensburg, Maryland. The court's order granting the motion permits the Legion to become a party in the lawsuit to defend the World War I memorial that it erected almost one hundred years ago. To view the Court's order: libertyinstitute.org/file/order-and-memo-granting-intervention.pdf.

In 1925, The American Legion erected the Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial in honor of 49 men of Prince George's County, Maryland, who gave their lives in the First World War while serving in the U.S. armed forces. It sits in the immediate vicinity of other veteran's memorials honoring those who served in the War of 1812, World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War, as well as a memorial to the fallen of September 11, 2001. The American Legion seeks to protect its interests in the Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial and to ensure the memorial, and others like it, continues to honor American veterans. American Legion Posts have participated in patriotic events at the Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial since its inception, including on Veterans Day. The lawsuit began on February 25 when a humanist group filed a complaint alleging that the public ownership, maintenance, and display of the memorial violated the *Establishment Clause* of the Constitution. The Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial joins a growing list of veteran's memorials across the country that have come under similar attack.

New VA Regulation

On September 23, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published its final regulations and fact sheet related to the Camp Lejeune historical drinking water contamination as required by law. VA announced the publication of two regulations: one providing health care for Camp Lejeune Veterans, and the other reimbursing for health care expenses of their family members potentially affected by contaminated drinking water at United States Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The regulations implement provisions of the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012."

The first regulation, entitled *Hospital Care and Medical Services for Camp Lejeune Veterans (AO78)*, took effect immediately. The second -- *Payment or Reimbursement for Certain Medical Expenses for Camp Lejeune Family Members (AO79)* -- will take effect in 30 days. The published regulations now allow VA to reimburse eligible Camp Lejeune family members for out-of-pocket health care costs related to any of the 15 covered medical conditions listed in the 2012 Act. Under that law, VA can reimburse costs from March 26, 2013, onwards. Family members can start applying 30 days after the regulation publication date. For information about VA's Camp Lejeune program, including eligibility and how to apply, visit <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune> or call 1-877-222-8387. Since the passage of law, VA has enrolled and provided health care to those Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987.

Background:

President Obama signed the *Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012* into law on August 6, 2012. In compliance with the law VA provides healthcare for those Veterans who meet the criteria for health care. From 1957 to 1987, people living or working at Camp Lejeune were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with chemicals known as volatile compounds, including industrial solvents and benzene from fuels.

The law provides that Veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987 will be eligible to receive health care through VA, and exposed family members will be reimbursed for health care costs, for the following medical conditions:

Esophageal cancer; Lung cancer; Breast cancer; Bladder cancer; Kidney cancer; Leukemia; Multiple myeloma; Myelodysplastic syndromes; Renal toxicity; Hepatitis steatosis; Female infertility; Miscarriage; Scleroderma; Neurobehavioral effects; and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. For family members, VA will be the last payer and will provide reimbursement after all other health insurance coverage and reimbursement is received, as required by law.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Who is eligible for the Camp Lejeune program?

A: Veterans may be eligible for Camp Lejeune coverage if they meet the following criteria:

- Served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for no less than 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987, and

- Meet all the qualifications for VA benefits, including meeting the VA definition of “Veteran,” and receiving a discharge other than dishonorable. Additional qualifications can be determined by completing the 10-10EZ form and enrolling in VA benefits.

Family members may be eligible for the program if they resided on Camp Lejeune as a dependent of an Active Duty Servicemember, or were in *utero*, for no less than 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987, and have one of the illnesses or conditions listed in the law. VA may reimburse costs associated with hospital care and medical services, as the last payer, for the eligible family members for the 15 illnesses or conditions. Once those family members have submitted claims to their insurance companies, they can apply to VA for reimbursement of the remaining balance of charges and fees connected to the qualifying illnesses.

Q: How do Veterans and family members apply for the Camp Lejeune program?

A: For Veterans: Veterans seeking to enroll in VA health benefits can enroll online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply or at their local VA Health facility (www.va.gov/directory). Veterans seeking more information about VA’s Camp Lejeune Program or to apply via phone can call 1-877-222-VETS (8387). Veterans should locate relevant documentation to show proof of Camp Lejeune residency of not less than 30 days (e.g., copies of orders, base housing records, medical or school records, etc.). This information will be utilized by the Veteran Health Administration to validate eligibility for care under this authority.

For family members: Once the family member regulation is effective, interested family members will be able to apply online. Submitted applications and supporting documentation will be reviewed to determine family member eligibility for the program. Once deemed eligible for the program, family members who have received care for one of the 15 Camp Lejeune conditions since March 26, 2013, can submit a claim for reimbursement. Family members should keep receipts for medical expenses related to the covered illnesses/conditions. Because the Camp Lejeune law only reimburses expenses, as the payer of last resort, related to the 15 conditions, family members should not change their existing health insurance. Family members who have questions regarding applying for Camp Lejeune Family Member Program benefits, claims payment, appeals, or other related matters should call toll-free 1-866-372-1144 between the hours of 7 am and 4:30 pm CST.

Q: Is the reimbursement for care retroactive?

A: No, reimbursement is only from the point in time the Veteran enrolls in VA, if after 8/6/12 or reimbursement of VA copayments back to 8/6/12, if already enrolled and identified as a Camp Lejeune member within 2 years of publication of the rule. VA began providing Veteran care for Camp Lejeune on 8/6/12, following the passage of the “Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012”.

Q: Does this law provide Veterans with disability compensation?

A: No. This law allows Camp Lejeune Veterans to enroll in VA health care. It does not provide service connection and compensation. Veterans who believe they have an injury/illness related to their military service may file a claim for disability for their condition at their Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office.

Final Call

Ronald E. DeMello, Past Post Commander, Goose Creek, Post 166 on September 21.

Barbara Leaphart’s husband, Marvin, passed Sunday morning 9/28. Barbara is the Auxiliary Department Chaplain. Her address is 125 Grace St., Lexington, SC 29072.

John V. Green, Past Post 6 Commander 1995-1996.

May their souls rest in peace.

LIT Information

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust is pleased to announce that online enrollment is now available for the LegionCare No Cost Accidental Death benefit. Please be sure to let your Department know about this one-of-a-kind benefit offered exclusively to Legionnaires.

LegionCare provides all Legionnaires with:

- \$5,000 in Accidental Death Coverage for covered accidents that occur if you are traveling on official Legion business.
- \$1,000 for all other covered accidents.
- 24/7 protection that covers Legionnaires at home, at work and while they are travelling away from home available for all Legionnaires in your Department.

To learn more or to sign up, please visit <http://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>.

Position Announcement

The Department of South Carolina is seeking a qualified individual to fill the position of Department Adjutant for the Department of South Carolina. This is a full-time paid position with health, dental, vision and other benefits. As the Chief Operations Officer, Chief Fiscal Officer and Finance Officer of the department, incumbent will be responsible for the administration of policies and procedures of both the National and Department American Legion, as well as the policies and mandates of the Department Convention, Department Executive Committee and as prescribed by the Constitution. He/she shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office. Applicants must have a valid South Carolina operator's license and must travel throughout the State of South Carolina on business for the department. Applicant must be a member of The American Legion in good standing and be assigned a Post in South Carolina and be an honorable discharged veteran from a branch of the U.S. military. Thorough knowledge of The American Legion programs and procedures is expected. Resume' must be received in the Department office on or before close of business October 10, 2014. Submit to Department Adjutant Search Committee, P.O. Box 3309, Irmo, South Carolina 29063. Also submit with resume' explaining interest in the position and salary history.

PUFL Information

Since last reported one month ago, the Paid Up For Life (PUFL) campaign has added just over 2,000 new members. To date 15,424 American Legion members have become PUFL members. 56% paid in full with the remainder opting for the 12 month time payment option. 73%, are Vietnam era veterans and later with the overall applicant average age being 65. An email blast was sent over a week's time to about 200,000 members, thus providing the spike in new PUFL applicants. Becoming a Paid Up For Life member in The American Legion is easier than ever before. For more information regarding the fund go to www.legion.org/pufl . After providing a name and ID number, the member will receive a cost quote; he or she can pay by credit card or print

out a personalized form and mail it in with a check. Those without an ID number can contact Customer Service at **1-800-433-3318** for their personalized offer.

Tricare Changes

Some TRICARE beneficiaries and their dependents no longer have to worry about paying higher enrollment fees for their health care each year, according to a new policy announced on Tuesday. The Pentagon has decided to freeze annual enrollment fees for two groups of Prime beneficiaries at the rate in effect at the time of their enrollment. The change affects survivors of active-duty deceased service members, and medically-retired uniformed services members and their dependents, both of whom are part of the retiree group under TRICARE rules. The new final rule, published in Tuesday's Federal Register, is an exception to current policy, which stipulates that TRICARE Prime enrollment fees are the same for all retirees and their dependents. The rule goes into effect on Oct. 30, 2014. Beneficiaries in those two TRICARE categories who enrolled in Prime before Oct. 1, 2013, and those since that date, will have their annual enrollment fee frozen at the appropriate fiscal year rate. The enrollment fees for fiscal 2011 through fiscal 2014 are:

- Fiscal 2011: \$230 (Single); \$460 (Family)
- Fiscal 2012: \$260 (Single); \$520 (Family)
- Fiscal 2013: \$269.38 (Single); \$538.56 (Family)
- Fiscal 2014: \$273.84 (Single); \$547.68 (Family)

Future beneficiaries added to these categories will have their fee frozen at the rate in effect at the time they are classified in either category and enroll in TRICARE Prime or, if not enrolling, at the rate in effect at the time of enrollment. The fee stays frozen as long as one family member is enrolled in TRICARE Prime in one of the two categories, and there is not a break in coverage. According to TRICARE's website, the fiscal 2015 TRICARE Prime enrollment fee will be \$277.92 (single) and \$555.84 (family). "The Prime beneficiaries in these categories have made significant sacrifices for our country and are entitled to special recognition and benefits for their sacrifices," said the notice in the Federal Register explaining the decision. Active-duty service members and their dependents do not pay for health care under TRICARE Prime. The military's massive health insurance program offers millions of service members, retirees and their dependents quality care at a relatively low cost. That's what the government aimed for when it created the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services in 1966, now known as TRICARE. But the price of that success has been high for Uncle Sam: The \$53 billion program now consumes 10 percent of the Pentagon's non-war budget. TRICARE premiums for beneficiaries have not kept up with inflation and the overall increase in health care costs during the past two decades. Congress agreed to raise TRICARE Prime annual enrollment fees for retirees in 2011 – the first time the fees have gone up since 1995. Since the legislative change, the rate of increase has been indexed to the rate of inflation. Retired TRICARE Prime beneficiaries now pay between \$30 and \$88 more in annual fees than they paid before the increase, which took effect in fiscal 2012. The Obama administration has proposed more aggressive changes to TRICARE, including tying annual fees to retired recipients' income and charging an enrollment fee for TRICARE for Life, the health care program Congress created in 2001 for military retirees age 65 and older. Congress so far has rejected both of those ideas. The Pentagon currently is reviewing military pay and benefits – including health care programs – through its Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission. The panel is scheduled to issue a report in early 2015 with recommendations for reform.

What's Happening

October 18, Saturday-District #5 Woodruff #133 10a, 6998 Hwy 101 N, meal following. Please RSVP # attending to District Commander Jack Wright 864-680-7114 (c), 864-578-1933 (h), jpb200@aol.com

October 18, Saturday-District #8 St. George #105 10a, 5429 Memorial Blvd.

November 1, Saturday-District #13 Garvin Rd., Liberty Post #151 10 am to noon. Light refreshments.

November 3, Monday-District #4 6p meal 7p meeting Loris #41, 2556 Main St., Loris

Task Force Marshall

FMI Carol Davis (803) 739-2774/(803) 467-4482.

Ms. Davis advises that planning for the 7th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for our deploying Sailors will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2014 at the National Guard Armory on Bluff Road. There are a number of food and non-food items that will be needed for the dinner. A listing of those items is separate from this article. More information will be forthcoming for interested to sign up to volunteer to help with the set-up and decorating of the Armory as well as helping serve and other areas where help will be needed the day of the dinner.

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.

Fisher House Charleston

A long-term stay in a military hospital, sometimes hundreds of miles from home, can easily mean expensive lodging and food costs. Fisher House Foundation ensures that the families are never burdened with a lodging fee, allowing the patient to focus on getting well with the comfort of knowing their family members are able to be with them through each step of their treatment. The proposed Fisher House Charleston will be part of a network of comfort homes through Fisher House Foundation, a private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. If you want to be part of this movement to locate a Fisher House in Charleston, contact Harbour House, Inc./Fisher House Charleston LLC, P O Box 829, Johns Island, SC 29457 or go to www.FisherHouseCharleston.org for more information.

Proud To Serve

Lloyd H. Woods
Department Adjutant