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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



PHONE 734-0200
227 BROWN STATE OFFICE BUILDING
1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29201

CARROLL A. CAMPBELL, JR.
GOVERNOR

PALMETTO
VETS GAZETTE

BILL J. SAMS
Director

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STATE DOCUMENTS

"From the Director's Desk"

We wish to express our deepest sympathy upon the sudden death of Mr. Hoyt B. Hill, Jr.

As a member of this agency for over 40 years, he was a great veteran advocate, as well as a friend to so many of you who worked with him serving the veterans of our great State. The many years he devoted to serving veterans, their widows and orphans, will be long remembered by the veterans of South Carolina. May your memories be a source of comfort.

The Richard Michael Campbell State Veterans Nursing Home is still on schedule. The opening date to receive the first veteran patient is October 1, 1990. Plans are now in process for the dedication of the facility and the recognition of the sacrifice of Richard Michael Campbell for his country. We will keep you informed as these plans develop.

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SERVICE ORGANIZATION NEWS

Several of the major service organizations have recently held election of officers. The new Department Commanders and Adjutants are listed below.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Adjutant</u>
American Legion	J. Norris Kinnion	B.L. Black
AMVETS	Gene Hewitt	Harold F. Slawson
Disabled American Veterans	LeVake Cauble	Fred G. Strom
Veterans of Foreign Wars	Johnnie C. Robinson	Vacant
Vietnam Veterans of America	Judy Miller	Mel Baker

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWS

It seems as though each June thirtieth is a dark day for the Agency, at least it has been for the past couple of years. This year we lost two of our most valuable personnel. Ms. Beverley J. Shirley retired after 26 years of state service. Beverley served as the Legislative Liaison for many years, and her services will be sorely missed. Claims Representative, Mr. Clyde Myers Jr., left to take a job with the Dorn VA Medical Center here in Columbia as a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counsellor. Both of these quality individuals left their own indelible mark. We can only wish them well in their new endeavors and hope that they will visit us often.

"VETERANS MEMORIAL EXPRESSWAY"

The General Assembly passed a Joint Resolution this past legislative session which directs the SC Department of Highways and Public Transportation to name the Southeastern Beltway from Interstate 26 to the Congaree River and from Leesburg Road to Interstate 20 the "Veterans Memorial Expressway" and to erect signs on the expressway which clearly indicate the name of the expressway.

COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICERS NEWS

Tuesday June 5, 1990 marked the passing of a very dear friend to most of us in the veterans community. Mrs. Etta A. Jaillette, worked in the Florence County Veterans Affairs office for 31 years, 17 of which she served as the Veterans Affairs Officer. Words cannot express the sorrow her passing has caused. "Ms. Etta" will long be remembered for her compassion and understanding as well as her tenacious pursuit of benefits for her veterans.

US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPENDITURES

The USDVA has recently released information on VA spending in South Carolina for Fiscal Year 1989. The following list details VA's expenditures by Congressional District for the fiscal year which ended September 30, 1989. A detailed breakdown by county and category is available upon request.

District 1	\$ 100,802,581
District 2	129,635,471
District 3	43,287,101
District 4	39,082,379
District 5	41,715,758
District 6	45,286,735
South Carolina Total	\$ 399,810,025

AGENT ORANGE UPDATE

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward Derwinski has announced that he has decided to have the VA recognize, as service-connected, soft tissue sarcomas and non-hodgkin's lymphoma, based on exposure to dioxin-containing herbicides. VA by regulation, presumes exposure to dioxin by all veterans who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam era.

In announcing his decision, Derwinski said, "I believe this is another step forward in resolving a most difficult and emotional issue. We intend to proceed as quickly as possible to award compensation to these veterans who are so deserving of our care and concern."

VA expects to publish a final regulation in early fall. An estimated 2900 veterans or survivors are expected to receive compensation for these two disabilities initially.

MORE ON AGENT ORANGE

Until recently, there was some question as to the Income Tax liability for a portion of the compensation veterans or survivors receive from the Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program. On May 16, 1990, the Internal Revenue Service issued a ruling that provides that payments made by the Payment Program to disabled veterans and survivors of deceased veterans are excluded from the recipient's income for purposes of federal income tax. If an individual has already reported such payment as income on his or her 1989 federal tax return, he or she should file an amended return. It is important to understand that this ruling applies only to federal income tax; state rules may vary.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL NEEDS REPAIR

A \$376,000 fund drive by the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is underway to repair hairline cracks in the black granite panels and to place names of additional war casualties on the memorial.

Donations may be sent to the Vietnam Memorial Fund, 1110 Vermont Avenue, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20005.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PERSONNEL UPDATE

D'Wayne Gray was sworn in as the Chief Benefits Director of the USDVA on April 6, 1990. Gray, a retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General, served as an artillery forward observer during the Korean War and served two tours in Vietnam. Prior to coming to the VA, Mr. Gray served as the executive director of the Montgomery County Revenue Authority in Rockville, Maryland.

VA CLAIMS PROCESSING

▲ little known change in VA law is having a significant impact on how the US Department of Veterans Affairs processes disability claims. Under the new law, the USDVA must explain the procedure for obtaining a review of decisions that affect a veterans's claim. The USDVA must also include the reason for the denial of a claim and provide a summary of the evidence considered if any part of a claim is denied. These requirements apply to all decisions made after January 31, 1990 and probably accounts for at least part of the reason it takes so long to get a claim processed these days. Currently, there are some 3900 rating board related claims in work at the Columbia VA Regional Office. With nine rating specialists, two of which are trainees, it becomes readily apparent why it takes so long to get a decision on a claim.

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DISABLED VETERANS MAY BE DUE TAX REFUNDS

Veterans released from active and given lump sum payments (severance pay) for service-connected injuries or diseases may be entitled to tax refunds if they are subsequently awarded disability compensation by the VA. Lump sum disability payments from the military are considered as taxable income. The military has no way of knowing if the VA is going to recognize the veteran's disability as service-connected, or whether the veteran will even file for compensation, so it deducts the taxes from the lump sum payment upon the individual's separation from active duty. If the veterans later files a claim and receives an award from the VA, he or she is entitled to a refund of the taxes withheld. Veterans should file an amended tax return (IRS 1040X) to claim this refund.

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