

VICTORY FOR VETERANS STAMP ACT UNVEILED

On May 18, 2012, Congressman John B Larson (D-CT) helped in unveiling the Victory for Veterans Stamp Act to help veterans, pay down the debt and support the US Postal Service.

This program is modeled after the successful Victory Stamp Drive of World War II. The Act helps the public to give back to all those who have served our nation by directly funding employment and training programs for veterans, as well as reducing the national debt and helping support the US Postal Service.

"In going through the letters my mother and father sent to each other during World War II, I couldn't help but notice a unique 'Victory' stamp that was used at the time as a means to help support the war effort. That stands in contrast to today where it seems like the only ones being asked to sacrifice for the wars are our troops and their families," said Larson. "The Victory for Veterans Stamp is intended to call upon American's sense of patriotism and desire to do what they can for our troops and the nation. It's easy. It's patriotic. And it's American."

Legislators from North Carolina who are supporting this bill are Heath Shuler (D-NC), Mel Watt (D-NC) and Patrick McHenry (R-NC).



WWII Victory Stamp

COME CELEBRATE "HEROES DAY"

On Sunday, July 8th at 10:00 a.m., Mountain Grove Church in Granite Falls, NC will have a morning to celebrate Heroes.

The church plans to take the entire morning to celebrate men and women who serve, protect, and guard this great nation. If you are in law enforcement, fire, rescue, EMS, active or veteran military, or any other service profession, this day is for and about you.

Mountain Grove Church is located at 2485 Connelly Springs Rd., Granite Falls. More information can be found at www.mountaingrove.org.

JUNE 2012

THE VETERANS RETRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VRAP)

In an effort to reduce Veteran unemployment, the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 was passed and signed into law last November. Included in this new law is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) for unemployed 35 to 60 year old Veterans.

The program is limited to 45,000 participants from July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, and to 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance at the full time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program (currently \$1473 per month). The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a certification, and train the Veteran for a high demand occupation.

The VA May offer incentive payments to encourage employers to hire and train program participants. The VA may be able to reimburse an employer up to one-half your annual salary for 6 months or longer.

Eligibility requirements include being unemployed, at least 35 but no more than 60 years old, have an other than honorable discharge, not eligible for any other VA education benefit program, not enrolled in a federal or state job training program and you must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school.

Please visit www.benefits.va.gov/VOW for an online application and more information.





VA RELEASES 2011 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VA EXPENDITURES

Every year the VA publishes expenditures for each county in each state across the United States. This spreadsheet breaks down the total amounts of money coming into each county in different areas of VA programs.

In 2011, there were 11,562 veterans residing in Catawba County. This amount will increase as there is a reduction in force. The total amount of VA expenditures in Catawba County in 2011 was \$56 million dollars. This amount includes the amount that veterans receive in monthly compensation and pension benefits from the VA as well as education benefits, and medical care. In 2011, 3,753 new veterans used the VA for either disability or healthcare in Catawba County.

The full report and previous years can be found at www.va.gov/vetdata/Expenditures.asp.

NC OFFERS FREE BURIAL PLOTS

Eligible veterans and their legal spouses are entitled to a free burial plot at a North Carolina State Veterans Cemetery.

Veterans must be discharged under honorable conditions and meet residency requirements. Other eligibility requirements include any former member of the U.S. Armed Forces whose service on active duty, other than for training, was terminated under honorable conditions, a veteran who is entitled to retired pay for non-regular service, a North Carolina resident at the time of the death, or a period of at least 10 years, or at the time the veteran entered the Armed Forces.

Spouses and dependents can also be buried at a State Veterans Cemetery. To be eligible you must be the spouse, widow or widower of a qualified veteran or a minor child who is unmarried and dependent on the qualified veteran at the time of death.

The primary document used to verify military service is the DD Form 214. This is the report of separation from Active Duty.

There is no charge for the gravesite or necessary interment services for the qualified veteran. There is however, a burial fee for an eligible spouse or family member.

Only government headstones are allowed in NC State Veterans Cemeteries. There is also no charge for installing the headstones. More information can be found at NC Department of Administration website.