



Volume 3, Issue 12

105 Sumter Ave. Summerville, SC 29483

December, 2025



Christmas Dinner Hosted by the Auxiliary

**December 8th
6:30**

China Town Restaurant

What's Inside This Issue:

List of Post Officers.....	3
November Meeting Information.....	4
History Lives Here.....	6
Did You Know?.....	8
Veterans On Deck.....	10
A Blast From The Past.....	12
Local Area Events and Opportunities.....	13
Veterans Affairs Information.....	17

Military Observances in December

December 7th

Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day

December 13th

U.S. National Guard
Birthday

December 20th

U.S. Space Force
Birthday



The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness.

Christmas Dinner Hosted by the Auxiliary



December 8th at China
Town Restaurant.

6:30 pm

1206 No. Main St.

Summerville

Summerville Post 21



Position	Officer
Commander	Ken Thompson
First Vice Commander	Kim Shultz
Second Vice Commander	Bill Schmitz
Finance Officer	Brian Ponder
Chaplain	Karl Naugle
Sergeant at Arms	Bill Dutour
Historian	Dave Corvino
Post Adjutant	Bob Ticknor
Judge Advocate	Steve Smith
Webmaster	Ken Thompson



Post Website: <https://summervillepost21.org/>

American Legion Post 21 - Clarence A. Dunning - Summerville, SC

Empowering heroes through community
and resources.

JOIN US

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS



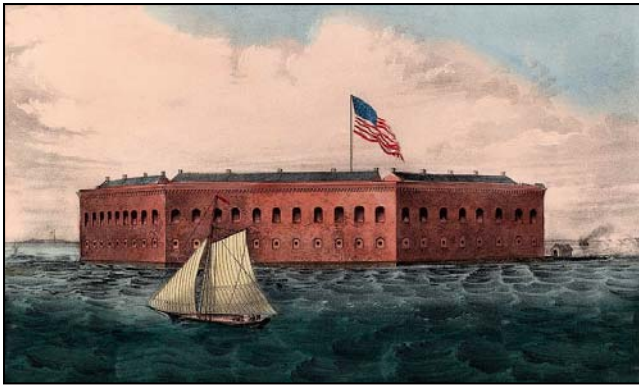
NOVEMBER POST MEETING

At the Post meeting in November, Kim Schultz provided the latest information on the planned expansion for Dorchester Road from Oakbrook down to I-526.



Dave Mattingly, JeanMarie Mattingly, and Marie Komyathy being recognized for their military service by the Palmetto Military Support Group at the Stingrays Hockey game on 14 December. Dave and Marie are members of Post 21.





History Lives Here

The Bikini Atoll Experimental Hellcat on the Yorktown

In 1976, a specific F6F-3K Hellcat aircraft was loaned to Patriots Point. It was placed on display as part of the museum's collection aboard the USS Yorktown. The aircraft in question (Bureau Number 41834) was originally a WWII-era drone used to collect data on radioactivity during the Operation Crossroads atomic bomb tests in 1946. After the tests, the plane was retired and



eventually assigned to the National Air Museum (now the National Air and Space Museum). In 1976, the museum loaned the Hellcat to the USS Yorktown museum. It underwent a "superficial restoration" there, but due to its poor condition and the harsh environment, it

was returned to the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum (NASM) in 1982. The aircraft was later fully restored by volunteers



at Grumman Aerospace and is now on display at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia. F6F Hellcat aircraft, including the F6F-3K drone variant, were used for radiological sampling at Bikini Atoll. Both F6F Hellcat fighters and B-17 Flying Fortress bombers were converted into remote-controlled drones for the tests. The F6F-3K designation indicates a drone variant. The drones were flown directly into the mushroom clouds to collect radioactive air samples and take

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

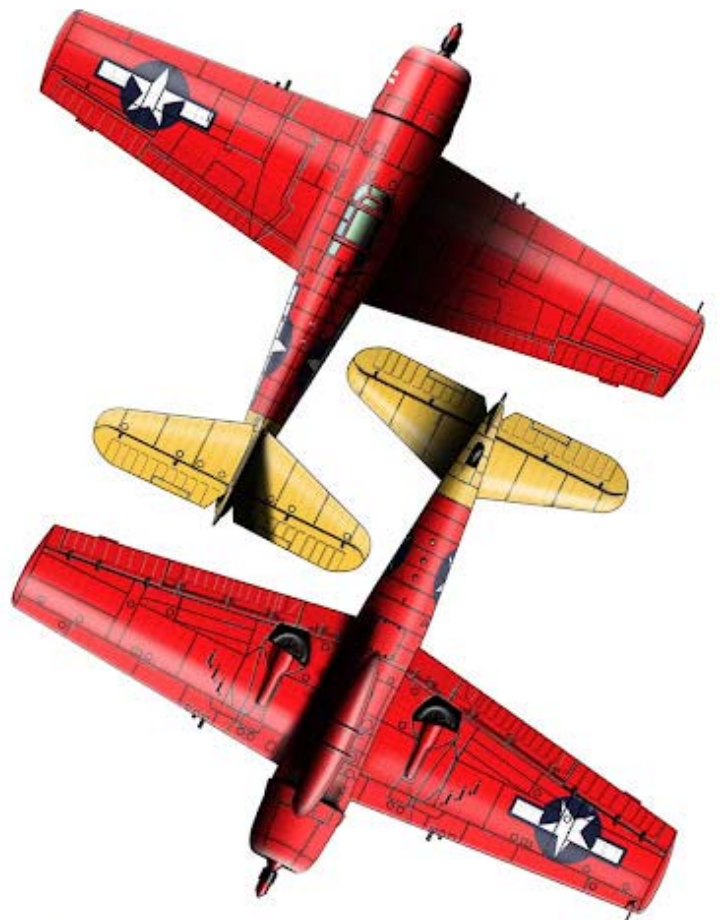
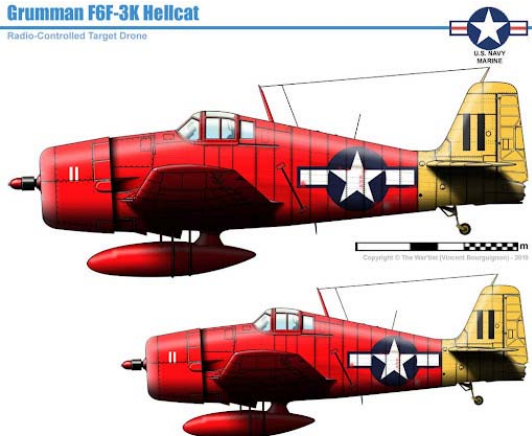
pictures, an extremely hazardous task that protected human pilots from the immediate, intense radiation. The Navy Hellcat drones used in Operation Crossroads were painted in bright colors (red with different colored tails to denote radio frequency) to help distinguish them, with some sources referring to them by the color of their tails (e.g., "Yellow," "White," and "Blue" sampled the cloud for the first shot, "Able"). The drones were controlled by pilots in a nearby "mother-ship" control aircraft or from a ground control station.



Shown here are F6F-3K Hellcat drones. Hellcat drones at NAS Atlantic City, N.J., 18 March 1946. drones like these were assigned to Operation Crossroads to fly through the atomic clouds at Bikini to measure radiation. The different colored tails indicated radio frequency of the aircraft.

Grumman F6F-3K Hellcat

Radio-Controlled Target Drone



War DRAWINGS
Military aircraft

Copyright © The WarTist (Vincent Bourguignon) - 2019

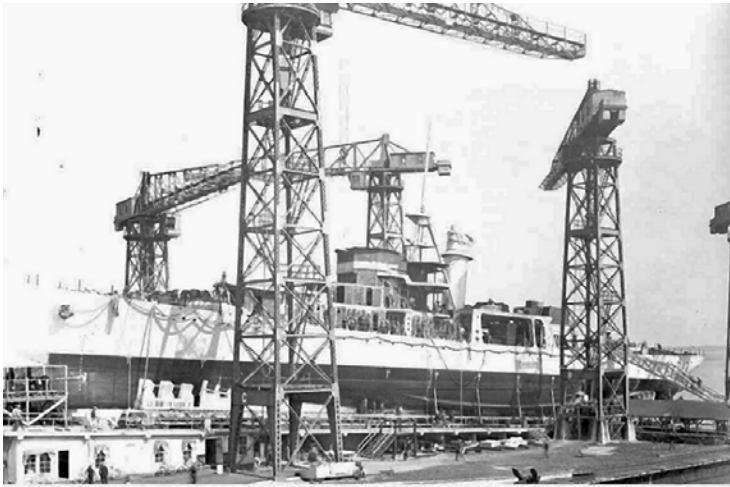


Did You Know?

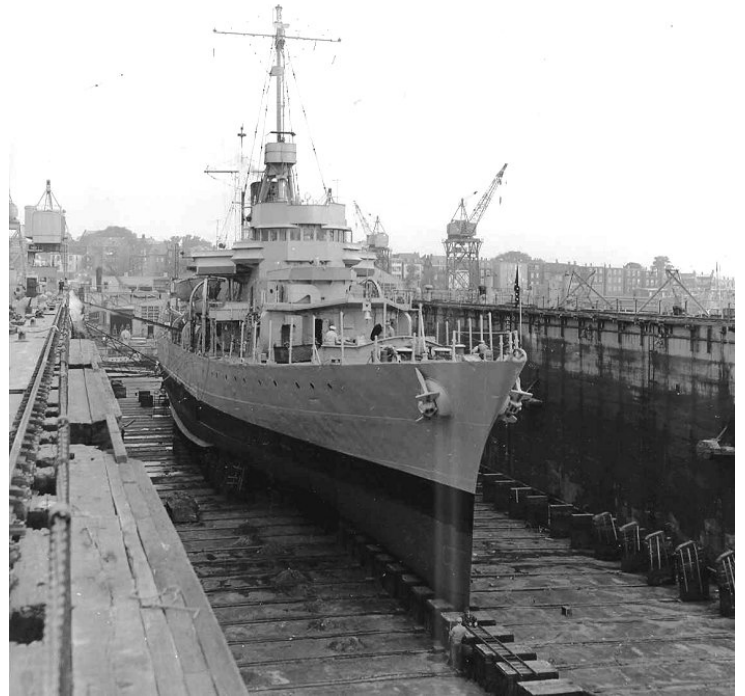
The USS Charleston PG-51

The USS Charleston (PG-51), was the fourth vessel to carry her name, and was the second of two Erie-class patrol gunboats. Launched from the Charleston Navy Yard on 25 February 1936, and commissioned on 8 July 1936, Charleston was part of the Atlantic Fleet. In September 1940, she cleared Norfolk, Virginia and headed for Seattle, Washington. From there, she headed to Alaska to the 13th Naval District. From 6 November 1940 – 27 November 1941, she made five cruises from Seattle to the Aleutians. Upon the entry of the United States into World War II, Charleston intensified the schedule of patrol and convoy escort duties necessary to protect this far

Francisco, California on 4 March 1946. Here she was decommissioned on 10 May and transferred to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy on 25 March 1948. She served as a training ship at the academy from 1948 until 1959. In 1959, The USS



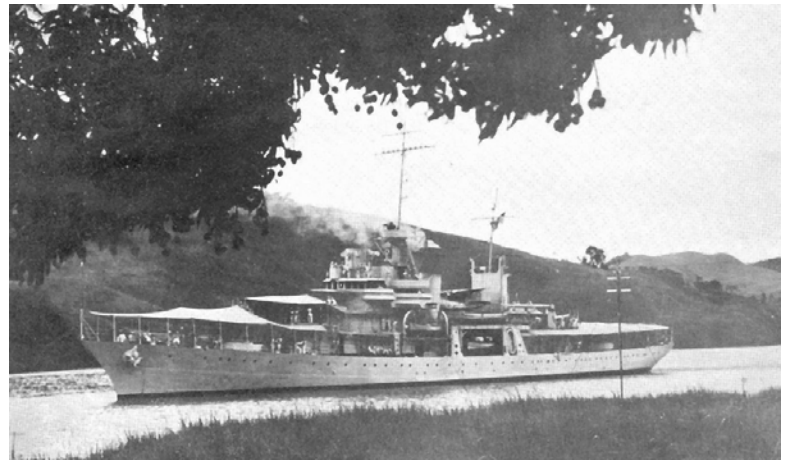
-northern region, and except for four voyages to west coast ports for maintenance, she operated from Dutch Harbor or Kodiak, Alaska throughout the war. At the close of the war, Charleston prepared for Far Eastern duty, and on 25 November 1945 arrived at Hong Kong. She also visited Shanghai before returning to San



Charleston was sold to an Italian investor with plans to convert it into a floating nightclub and hotel. However, its final fate remains unknown.

More pictures on the next page....

USS Charleston PG-51





Veterans On Deck



In 2010, as the Director of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Program at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, Dr. Ron Acierno had the only “Best Practices Clinic” in the United States. Even though the veterans participating in this program were leaving with diminished overt PTSD symptoms, they were still suffering from social withdrawal and isolation. Dr. Acierno wanted to find a means to address and treat these lingering social issues, and so, turning to other civic leaders in the community who were themselves veterans, he began to develop the framework for what would eventually become Veterans on Deck.

For veterans suffering from PTSD, interaction is not the only aspect of a social event they wish to avoid, there is also the element of social stress. Dr. Acierno and his new colleagues designed a program where veterans could gather socially, but still be required to participate in an activity which affected a certain amount of social stress. In order for these men and women to be helped, it had to be in the context of a socially stressful situation that could be controlled and ultimately mastered, hopefully with positive social effects. A sailboat was the perfect location to hold these gatherings, and the process of sailing was the ideal stressor; sailing can be a novel activity, is at times stressful, and most importantly, requires working as a team to sail the boat.

Veterans on Deck was officially approved for nonprofit status in the state of South Carolina in 2011, in addition to receiving “community partner” status with the VA. Since then, VoD has connected with several other veteran service organizations in the community and continues to receive referrals from the VA. VoD has extended the scope of participation through community engagement, outreach, and social media.

Mission

Veterans on Deck works to prevent and treat the invisible wounds that affect members of our Armed Forces, during and after their service, through a sailing program that offers holistic support and resiliency training. There is no fee to participate and come sail with us.

Location

Our two 30-foot sailboats are docked at The Harborage at Ashley Marina, 33 Lockwood Drive, Charleston SC. We sail in Charleston Harbor, weather permitting. Check our Veterans on Deck Facebook page for any weather-related cancellations.

Sailing Schedule

We currently sail three days a week, 1PM to 3PM. Tuesdays-Men’s Sail; Wednesdays-Women’s Sail and All-Comers Sail; Fridays: All-Comers Sail. Pre-registration is not required but due to limited space on board, signing up via our calendar will take precedence over walk-ups.

'IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CAMARADERIE'



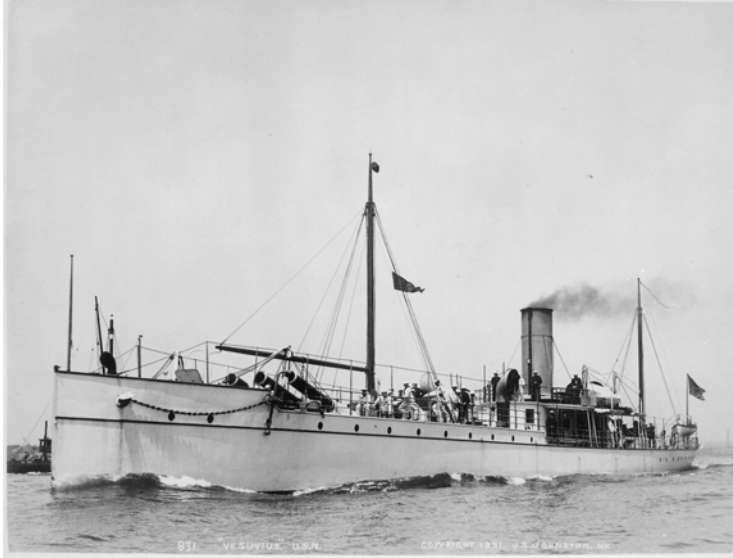
MILITARY SALUTE REGATTA CELEBRATES VETERANS

In May 2025, the community outreach efforts of Veterans on Deck expand further as it becomes the new organizing body for the Military Salute Regatta. The regatta was initiated five years ago by the Charleston Ocean Race Association (CORA) to get active-duty military and veterans out for a day on the water. The weekend of events includes the race and a 300-passenger viewing boat for those who don't want to sail, as well as a post-race party.

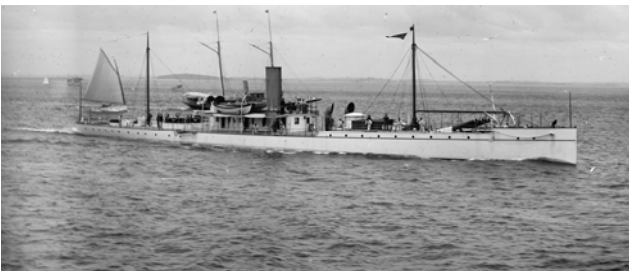
Due to the strength of its outreach among local veterans and active-duty bases, this fund-and friend-raising event will now be run by VoD. The organization looks forward to getting even more veterans involved in the race in 2025 and in future years.



UNIQUE NAVY SHIPS



The USS Vesuvius' three pneumatic guns could fire 550-lbs high explosive shells at targets up to a mile away and were used during the Spanish-American War in 1898 to bombard enemy emplacements in Cuba. Since the guns quietly propelled shells with compressed air, it was reported that the enemy became unnerved because of their inability to hear any boom preceding incoming fire. Their success as a terror weapon aside, dynamite guns quickly fell out of favor due to their lack of accuracy and high maintenance needs. Vesuvius' dynamite guns were removed and replaced with torpedo tubes. The ship later suffered the indignity of almost sinking itself when one of its torpedoes circled back and slammed into the hull.



REINA MERCEDES. SPANISH WARSHIP, NOW USED AS A TRAINING SHIP, U. S. NAVAL ACADEMY.

Unlike students at other colleges, unruly midshipmen at the Naval Academy were never put on probation. Instead they were forced to live on a prison ship. That ship was USS Reina Mercedes, which had been captured in Cuba by the U.S. Navy during the Spanish American War. The prize was initially sent to Boston as a receiving ship for new recruits waiting for their first assignments. It was then transferred to Annapolis in 1912 where it served several functions including barracks for midshipmen who had committed various infractions. Although the ship was often referred to as a floating brig, rogue midshipmen ordered to live on board as punishment were not actually considered prisoners. The ship was really just a detention hall where misbehaving midshipmen had to return after completing their classes and drills. The practice ended in 1940 and the ship was used primarily as quarters for academy personnel until it was sold for scrap in 1957.





Backpack Buddies

We supply Summerville Elementary with food for children that might not otherwise have food over each weekend. This program feeds 36 children from Summerville Elementary. Please bring the following items to the Post meeting each month, or bring cash to donate.

Breakfast: Packages of instant grits
 Packages of instant oatmeal
 Mini-muffins (Little Bites)
 Small individual boxes of cereal
 Breakfast bars (such as NutriGrain bars)

Drinks:
 Sunny D (individual bottles)
 Orange juice (individual bottles)
 Horizon Organic Milk (not refrigerated, individual servings of plain, vanilla or chocolate)
 Capri Sun juices
 Juice boxes of any flavor
 Yahoo chocolate milk in boxes or cans
 Nesquik Chocolate drink (individual bottles)

Entrees:
 Beanie Weanies (small cans that can be microwaved)
 Chef Boyardee meals in cans (with pop tops)
 Individual boxes of tuna and crackers or chicken and crackers
 Vienna sausages
 Hormel Compleat meals (individual meals, available in packages of 3 at Walmart)
 Macaroni and cheese (individual servings that you can microwave)

Snacks:
 Applesauce in individual cans/plastic containers
 Cheez-its (individual bags)
 Rice Krispie treats
 Pirate booty (individual bags)
 Cheese or peanut butter crackers
 Boxes of raisins
 Popcorn (individual servings)
 Chocolate pudding cups
 Buddy Fruits (these look like drinks but they are fruit snacks)
 Little Debbie oatmeal cakes
 Pringles chips in individual containers

We try to put an apple or orange in the bags at least once a month, so a bag of fruit is also welcomed.

Old Time Christmas Celebration & Tree Lighting

Tuesday, Dec. 2
5:30pm - 8:30pm
Hutchinson Square



*Christmas Lights
Food Trucks
Santa Claus
Live Music
& More!*

Sponsored By



100 S. Main Street
Summerville, SC, 29483

The Summerville
Christmas Parade ! This
year's theme is: Home
for the Holidays.

December 2nd,
5:30 to 8:30

Hutchinson Square

Also at Hutchinson Square! December 14th, Begins at 2:00 pm

200 South Main Street.
Summerville, SC 29483

Get into the holiday season
with our annual Old Time
Christmas Celebration!

Friends and family are
invited to come out and deck
the halls as we unveil our
seasonal decorations and
light the Christmas tree. This
event will include food
trucks and vendors, as well
as the tree lighting
ceremony, live music, mail
letters to AND meet Santa

Claus, and our annual Live Window Display contest amongst local businesses.

This is a FREE event open to the public. Citizens should expect traffic in the area as there will be street closures on Doty, Richardson, and Main St. for setup and during this event.

THE ANNUAL 2025

Summerville CHRISTMAS PARADE



2nd Sunday on King Street



2nd Sunday on King Street - King Street shops, Charleston, SC 29401

If you're wondering who, what, where, why of 2nd Sunday, here's the scoop. Every month on the second Sunday the City of Charleston helps us to shut down King Street (our Main Street) from Queen to Calhoun, roughly 1/2 mile, to through traffic and without parked cars, for 5 blissful hours. That gives us the whole street for people to walk around with a big smile, greet friends and neighbors, and enjoy Charleston as it would be on any old day without the traffic. Strolling guests see businesses they didn't know about, stores roll out past the sidewalk to invite shoppers in, carefully curated artists show their work on the street, and unique food vendors tempt guests with their fare. The street closes to through traffic at noon, and opens back up at 5pm.


Date

December 14, 2025

THIRD THURSDAYS

 5:30p-8:30p (unless otherwise listed)

EVERY Third Thursday of the Month

 Hutchinson Square, W. Richardson &
Short Central



- EVERY Third Thursday of the month
- 5:30 PM-8:30 PM – Rain or shine (unless otherwise listed)
- Hutchinson Square, W. Richardson & Short Central

On the third Thursday of each month, Historic Downtown Summerville transforms into a special marketplace featuring local entertainment, craft vendors and artisans, to complement the extended hours of our eclectic shops, boutiques and restaurants.

Third Thursday traffic is rerouted from 4:00 PM until 9:00 PM from the following streets; Little Main Street, W Richardson to Central (closed for traffic). There is plenty of FREE parking throughout the downtown including the town garage behind Town Hall.



Dorchester County Veterans Affairs



Summerville

500 N. Main St.
Summerville, SC 29483

Please use the Main St.
Entrance.

Office Hours:

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Monday - Friday

Phone: (843) 832-0050

The Dorchester County Veterans Affairs Office assists veterans and their families who reside in Dorchester County in all matters that pertain to veterans and Veteran Benefits. You can contact the Veterans Affairs office at (843) 832-0050 to schedule an in-person or virtual appointment.

The Veterans Affairs office assists all ex-service personnel with financial compensation claims including but not limited to:

- Hospitalization
- Training
- Insurance Benefits

These services are extended to eligible dependents, including parents, widows, children and orphans of ex-service personnel.

If you need support for a specific mental health problem - or if you're having problems sleeping, controlling your anger, or readjusting to civilian life - you are not alone. You don't need to be enrolled in VA health care to get care. To access free VA mental health services right away:

- Call or walk-in to any VA Medical Center - anytime, day or night
- Call or walk-in to any Vet Center during clinic hours

If you have questions about enrolling in VA health care, please contact the VA via phone at 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST. Veterans with hearing loss are asked to use the TTY phone number 1-800-877-8339.

Newly separated service members can expect three calls from qualified VA Solid Start representatives over the first year of separation. VA will attempt to contact you several times around 90, 180 and 365 days post-separation, so make sure your contact information is up to date in eBenefits.

VA Solid Start representatives will not ask you for financial information and will only discuss topics you are comfortable with. Remember that phone scammers often target Veterans, so always be vigilant and protect your financial information when talking to someone you don't know over the phone.

For questions about VA Solid Start, call 1-800-827-0611, Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST.

St. George

201 Johnston Street
St. George, SC 29477

The St. George office is
located on the Raysor St.
side of the building, behind
DSS.

Office Hours:

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Tuesday

Phone: (843) 563-0116

VA Clinics

Trident VA Clinic

9237 University Boulevard
North Charleston, SC 29406-8908
Phone: 843-574-1010

North Charleston VA Clinic

6450 Rivers Avenue
North Charleston, SC 29406-4882
Phone: 843-818-5100

Charleston VA Clinic

2424 City Hall Lane
Community Resource & Referral Center
Suite B
North Charleston, SC 29406-6538
Phone: 843-789-6804
Mental health: 843-577-5011

Goose Creek VA Clinic

2418 NNPTC Circle
Goose Creek, SC 29445-6314
Phone: 843-818-6999, ext. 343100
Mental health: 843-577-5011

Ralph H. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

109 Bee Street
Charleston, SC 29401-5799
Phone: 843-577-5011

Beaufort VA Clinic

1 Pinckney Boulevard
Beaufort, SC 29902-6122
Phone: 843-770-0444

