

SOUND OFF!



VOL. I, NO 4

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

10 SEPTEMBER 2005

FIRST CALL - THEME OF THE ISSUE AND/OR CLIPS & QUOTES

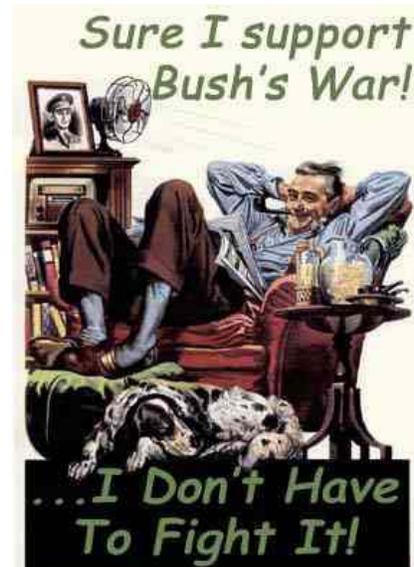
In this issue we will concentrate on the concept of shared sacrifice, one of the motivating goals of Veterans United For Truth, and perhaps the most important.

Our troops are sacrificing much more than is commonly recognized. Some are making the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives. Many are sacrificing very close to the same level through suffering wounds so terrible that their lives will never be what they could have been. Others are sacrificing homes and businesses because their deployment is uncertain as to time, and their pay as soldiers is often much less than it was before. Finally families are sacrificing through the agony they are suffering, not knowing when Daddy or Mommy is coming home, and increasingly unsure of why they left in the first place.

Those who claim that we are all sacrificing tend to cite such trivial issues as paying more for gasoline as their definition of sacrifice.

Whether it is war, or investing, or even sports, we all know that without a stake in the game, we really aren't involved.

If a war is worth fighting, then it is worth sacrificing for, across the board. Past Presidents and Legislators have demanded at least the minimum sacrifice through tax surcharges, and windfall profit taxes. We need some of that kind of sacrifice now, otherwise our leaders will continue to believe that they can involve us in unnecessary wars whenever they wish, because the American public will just go on about their business. If we need guns, we ought to be able to sacrifice the butter. "Guns and butter" doesn't work – never has!



SOME WISDOM FROM AN OLD ANARCHIST ~

"The point of public relations slogans like "Support our troops" is that they don't mean anything... That's the whole point of good propaganda. You want to create a slogan that nobody's going to be against, and everybody's going to be for. Nobody knows what it means, because it doesn't mean anything. Its crucial value is that it diverts your attention from a question that does mean something: Do you support our policy? That's the one you're not allowed to talk about." ~ **Noam Chomsky**

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS

MORAL LOGIC OF COMMON SACRIFICE

Monday, August 8, 2005 - 8:03 p.m. EDT (00:03 GMT) WASHINGTON (Creators Syndicate)

In his landmark book on the infantryman, "Mud Soldiers," George Wilson quoted Col. Steve Siegfried, a combat veteran, on why the United States must reinstate the military draft in wartime: "Armies don't fight wars. Countries fight wars. I hope to hell we learned that in Vietnam. ... A country fights a war. If it doesn't, then we shouldn't send an army." <More at:

http://www.creators.com/opinion_show.cfm?next=2&ColumnsName=msh>

[Fellow VUFT'ers, this is a good article. Also, Steve Siegfried was my classmate at Infantry OCS 40+ years ago. Editor]

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Plans are moving along for our California Legislative Action Day, tentatively set for 11 November 2005. We are interested in contacting veterans in the following California districts where members of the Veterans' Affairs Committees reside: Senate Districts 38 (San Diego, Orange); 32 (Los Angeles, San Bernardino); 2 (Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma); 12 (Madera, Merced, San Benito, Stanislaus, Monterey); 34 (Orange). Also in the following Assembly districts: 6 (Marin); 70 (Orange); 11 (Contra Costa); 57 (Los Angeles); 7 (Napa, Sonoma, Solano); 55 (Los Angeles); 75 (San Diego); 36 (San Bernardino); 76 (San Diego). Let the Chair know at rhandy@vuft.org.

We hope that other members in other states will take a look at what we in California plan to do and schedule their own confrontations with their Veterans' Affairs Committees. We have to get these people moving!

REMINDER: Part of our task is to expand our current anecdotal evidence of the failure of the system to include factual and referenced instances of such failures. If you know of specific cases of failure of service to any current or past veteran of our wars, or their families, please forward the information to muren@vuft.org, with a copy to the editor at scook@vuft.org.

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

A letter to Military.com from one of the members of our Advisory Committee.

WADE R. SANDERS: A HOBSON'S CHOICE: SHOWDOWN OR SALVATION

August 31, 2005 http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,Sanders_083105,00.html

Why is it when a political leader's plans go terribly awry, they often call upon the lives of the fallen to justify those plans? When public opinion turned decisively against the Vietnam War (a war, like the Iraq War, that was justified by a series of questionable facts and decisions), President Lyndon Johnson told the American people that withdrawing from Vietnam without victory would dishonor and render meaningless the sacrifice of those who had died in its pursuit. Speaking as one who served in combat in Vietnam, I can attest that I knew few who understood why we were there in the first place, or who saw any greater purpose to the death of our friends and comrades in arms. We were doing our duty and our attention was riveted on the prospect of getting us all home alive.

An extract of a letter to many veterans from the Democratic National Committee.

DEMOCRATS SALUTE VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES WITH HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP EFFORT

by Christine Pelosi, California DNC Committeewoman

Our unanimous support for a DNC Resolution establishing a Veterans and Military Families outreach effort has resulted in the convening of this fall's historic first-ever meeting of the Democratic National Veterans and Military Families Council. ...

We can and must do more. We need an engaged, informed national conversation about the nature of American service. Should we expand AmeriCorps for compulsory national service in military or civilian work? Would repealing "don't ask, don't tell" lead to broader military recruiting from Junior ROTC in high schools to JAG in law schools? When should we use force unilaterally or multilaterally? Do we deploy peacekeepers, for example, in Liberia to prevent another Rwanda? After Iraq, who will support a pre-emptive strike? ...

Join the Democratic Veterans and Military Families Council when we organize in your state.

You may begin by clicking here: (<http://www.democrats.org/vmfc>)

Christine Pelosi

In the interest of equal time I tried to find a comparable RNC organization or group, but cannot. If someone knows of one please let me know scook@vuft.org

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

NEWS ANALYSIS: FOR BUSH, SMALLER GOALS IN IRAQ

Steven R. Weisman August 29, 2005

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 - As Iraq's draft constitution was presented to its National Assembly and honored at a brief ceremony largely boycotted by Sunnis, President Bush joined with others in his administration on Sunday in praising the charter as a milestone in the transition to democracy and the battle against insurgents.

But in the disarray in Baghdad that was becoming evident, with Sunnis and some Shiites vowing to defeat the constitution and others angrily predicting a surge in anti-government violence, statements by the president and others in his administration had the air of making a case that the situation was not as bad as it looked.

Several administration officials acknowledged deep regret and frustration that all their efforts had failed to produce a document that could not only establish human rights but also bring a huge disaffected element into the political process, as the Americans had hoped and predicted. <More at http://www.skyhen.org/Focus/iraqcoverage/for_bush_smaller_goals_in_iraq.php>

MORE ON CALIFORNIA BILL AB 1525 – REVISION TO THE REVENUE AND TAX CODE

Please ask your friends and family to support AB 1525 by contacting their Assembly members today. As I asked you Californians to do in the last issue, I contacted my Assembly person, Sam Blakeslee, (R – 33rd AD). Part of his response was, “[AB 1525] constitutes a tax increase on business. ... It is important that California attract and retain a dynamic business community ... I appreciate your comment and will continue working hard to ensure that our National Guard return home to a state that shows them the honor and respect they have earned.” Apparently Blakeslee believes that an increase in taxes on businesses and some of the wealthiest members of California society that amounts to **3/1,000ths of a percentage point of our state GDP** would drive businesses from the state. I am sorry to say, his vote was predictable. As far as “respect and honor” is concerned, I think that our Guardspersons would take a little less of that in exchange for a little more direct support to their families.

RETREAT – NEWS

IRAQI FORCES MAY NEED YEARS OF PREPARATION

Tom Lasseter - [Knight Ridder Newspapers](#) - Aug 28, 2005

American Sgt. LaDaunte Strickland, sweat pouring down his face, stared at the four Iraqi soldiers sitting in the shade of a truck. They were supposed to be helping Strickland and a group of U.S. Marines man a vehicle-control point, a basic operation in which troops hope to catch insurgents at traffic stops they set up quickly on the roadsides. “Come on. Come on! Get up,” said Strickland, 30, of Cleveland, stabbing a cigar in the air to make his point. “Damn, will you PLEASE get up!” The Iraqis didn't stir. Without an interpreter - a common occurrence - the Iraqis didn't understand Strickland, no matter how loud he got. <More at <http://www.realcities.com/mld/kwashington/12487357.htm>>

FIGHTING UNSEEN ENEMY CREATES PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON TROOPS

Tom Lasseter - [Knight Ridder Newspapers](#) - Sep 02, 2005

The inability of U.S. forces to hold ground in Anbar province in western Iraq, and the cat and mouse chase that ensues, has put the Marines and soldiers there under intense physical and psychological pressure.

The sun raises temperatures to 115 degrees most days, insurgents stage ambushes daily then melt into the civilian population and American troops in Anbar find themselves in a house of mirrors in which they don't speak the language and can't tell friend from foe. <More at <http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/?Page=Article&ID=4764>>

And finally, these two stories – Who's really running the place?

INSURGENTS ASSERT CONTROL OVER TOWN NEAR SYRIAN BORDER

By Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer - The Washington Post - Tuesday 06 September 2005

Zarqawi's forces kill US-allied Iraqis and impose strict law, witnesses say.

Baghdad - Fighters loyal to militant leader Abu Musab Zarqawi asserted control over the key Iraqi border town of Qaim on Monday, killing U.S. collaborators and enforcing strict Islamic law, according to tribal members, officials, residents and others in the town and nearby villages. <More at http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/090605K.shtml>

IRAQI ARMY TAKES CONTROL OF NAJAF

U.S. troops hand over authority for the holy city but do not rule out continuing their patrols.

By Ashraf Khalil and Edmund Sanders - Times Staff Writers - September 7, 2005

NAJAF, Iraq — U.S. troops withdrew from this holy city in southern Iraq on Tuesday, an initial step in the military's effort to pull back from the country's urban centers and turn over authority to Iraqi forces.

Under waving Iraqi flags, U.S. commanders formally turned over control of Forward Operating Base Hotel, a square, concrete-walled American base on the edge of Najaf, a shrine city about 100 miles south of Baghdad that saw intense fighting last year.

"The Iraqi army is operating successfully throughout the region," said Lt. Col. James Oliver, the outgoing base commander, as he handed over the ceremonial keys to the base. "They are fully independent and capable of responding to all security needs. We are now here in a strictly advisory mode." <More at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-najaf7sep07,1,2921882.story?coll=la-headlines-world>>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
24-Sep	Noon	Washington DC - The White House	National Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	11:00	San Francisco - Dolores Park	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Los Angeles - Olympic & Broadway	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Seattle - Westlake Plaza	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-26 Sep	11:00	DC - Washington Monument	March and Meetings	United for Peace & Justice	End-the-war
29 Oct	09:30	Sacramento – Capitol North Steps	March	Various Veterans Groups	Veterans Benefits
11-Nov	11:00	NYC – Madison Sq Park /5 th Ave	Parade	NYC Event Planning	Celebrate Vets

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

ALL QUIET ON THE HOME FRONT, AND SOME SOLDIERS ARE ASKING

WHY

By THOM SHANKER - Published: July 24, 2005

WASHINGTON, July 23 - The Bush administration's rallying call that America is a nation at war is increasingly ringing hollow to men and women in uniform, who argue in frustration that America is not a nation at war, but a nation with only its military at war.

From bases in Iraq and across the United States to the Pentagon and the military's war colleges, officers and enlisted personnel quietly raise a question for political leaders: if America is truly on a war footing, why is so little sacrifice asked of the nation at large? <More at: http://history.berkeley.edu/faculty/Frydl/military_memo.html>

If we are to completely share the sacrifice, then government programs need to be in place that place the burden on us all. Lacking that, we must help where we can in volunteer efforts. Veterans United For Truth are focusing on getting legislative action to increase our shared sacrifice. Others focus their volunteer efforts through voluntary contributions to those who have given the most. One of the best of these efforts is the "Fisher House" program. Ed.

SHARED SACRIFICE

August 15, 2005 - http://www.cultureby.com/trilogy/2005/08/shared_sacrific.html

Bob Herbert of the *Times* tells the tragic story of Bobby Rosendahl, a 24-year-old Army corporal from Tacoma, Washington. Corporal Rosendahl was injured on March 12 in Iraq. He has lost one leg to amputation and is struggling to keep the other, not least, his mother says, because he is a passionate golfer. Corporal Rosendahl has now had 36 surgeries.

Herbert makes this important point

Families forced to absorb the blow of a loved one getting wounded frequently watch other pillars of their lives topple like dominoes. What is unusual with regard to this war is the absence of a sense of shared sacrifice. While families like Ms. Olson's are losing almost everything, most of us are making no sacrifice at all.

One way to share in the sacrifice is to support Fisher House Foundation. Fisher House donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times - during the hospitalization for an unexpected illness, disease, or injury.

There is at least one Fisher House™ at every major military medical center to assist families in need and to ensure that they are provided with the comforts of home in a supportive environment.

Annually, the Fisher House™ program serves more than 8,500 families, and have made available more than 1,500,000 days of lodging to family members since the program originated in 1990.

[I]t is estimated that families have saved nearly \$60 million by staying at a Fisher House™ since the program began.

To learn more about Fisher House <http://www.fisherhouse.org>.

To give online: <http://www.fisherhouse.org/contribute/onlineGiving.shtml>

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE IN IRAQ

By Gen. (ret.) Wesley Clark - Washington Post - August 26, 2005

In the old, familiar fashion, mounting US casualties in Iraq have mobilized increasing public doubts about the war. Now, more than half the American people believe that the invasion of Iraq was a mistake. They're right. But it would also be a mistake now to pull out, start pulling out, or set a date to pull out. Instead we need a strategy to create a stable democratizing and peaceful state in Iraq – a strategy the Administration has failed to develop and articulate. More at <http://securingsamerica.com/articles/wapo/2005-08-26>

THEY FOUGHT FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN IRAQ. NOW VETERANS ARE STRUGGLING TO FIND A DECENT JOB IN THE UNITED STATES.

Moustafa Ayad - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Sunday, September 04, 2005

A year ago, former Sgt. Jaquaie McAtee was in charge of the most sought-after service in Iraq.

McAtee, a mine expert, was responsible for locating and detonating the most effective weapon in the arsenal of the metastasizing insurgency -- improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

After three tours of duty, two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, McAtee returned from battle as one of the most competent men in his field, working against the roadside bombings that take so many soldiers' lives. He led 12-man teams into the fray of Fallujah at the height of the coalition's mission to rid the town of rebels, yet has come home to the stigma of being unable to hold a job as simple as herding crowds of raucous Steelers fans through the gates of Heinz Field.

"We left with nothing, and we came back to nothing," said McAtee, a 23-year-old veteran who lives in East Liberty. He has fought two wars in two countries and now struggles on the front lines of the job market, fighting unsuccessfully for work.

He's not alone. Soldiers in his age group have the highest unemployment rate in the country, which both surprises and frustrates him. "What else do I have to prove to my country? Do I have to get shot to get a job?" <More at <http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/?Page=Article&ID=4790>>

BRAIN INJURY MEANS HE'LL 'NEVER BE THE SAME'

Carol Ann Alaimo - ARIZONA DAILY STAR - Sep 05, 2005

There's a sound Maria Castillo can't get out of her mind since her son was nearly killed in Iraq.

It's the awful sound of mothers weeping for their maimed sons and daughters in the corridors of Walter Reed Army Hospital .

"The nurses tell you not to cry in front of the patients, so the mothers go out in the hall," said Castillo, a reservations agent at American Airlines in Tucson.

Thirteen months have passed since her son, Army Spc. Erik Castillo, was hit by mortar fire while on convoy duty in Baghdad, leaving a grapefruit-size hole in his skull that likely would have killed him had it happened in a different era.

The wounds left him looking like a Picasso painting, with asymmetrical eyes and other facial features. Despite several surgeries and months of grueling therapy, the 22-year-old is deaf and disfigured on his right side and lame on his left, with no chance of complete recovery. <More at <http://www.dailystar.com/dailystar/allheadlines/91799.php>>

OFF THE FRONT LINES AND FORGOTTEN

By Rose Aguilar, AlterNet - August 29, 2005

Twenty-five-year-old Michael Thomas, a member of the Navy since December 2002, was on the ship that fired the first tomahawks on Baghdad in March 2003. He was discharged for psychological problems three months later.

When I met Thomas at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital in Muskogee, Oklahoma, he was still visibly shaken by the experience. On his "bad days," he locks himself in his room. "I usually don't talk to anyone. I usually cry and get depressed. No one sees it because I isolate myself."

.... If you don't ask questions, you won't get the answers," he says. "I'm still trying to get my claim. I filed it in December. ... I got stabbed and there's no record of it. I'm not eligible for benefits because it didn't happen during a conflict. They wrap a lot of that stuff under humanitarian awards. As soon as I got hurt, I was treated like a piece of crap." Hammons says the claim he filed with the VA took 14 months to process; it took another four months to get into the VA medical system. "My experience with the VA has been horrible. I go to a private doctor for pain meds. If I need to see a doctor here [at the VA], it takes three to four months to get an appointment," he says. ... situation. "If they [politicians] supported our troops, Iraq war veterans that come back with missing legs wouldn't have to wait six months to get an appointment. Until that's taken care of, they're lying," he says. "I know personally <More at <http://www.alternet.org/story/24477/>>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 121,166; Navy Reserve, 4,456; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 10,950; Marine Corps Reserve, 8,843; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 538. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 145,953, including both units and individual augmentees. www.defenselink.mil/releases/2005/nr20050831-4606.html. In addition 40,000 National Guard members (plus 7,200 regulars) have been mobilized for Hurricane Katrina relief. <http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/story.asp?id=1748>

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2005

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	1,886
WOUNDED US	≥ 14,120
KILLED UK	93
KILLED OTHER COALITION	101
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	582
KILLED CONTRACTORS	257
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 32,830
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 27,705
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIV	≥ 131,411

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	232
WOUNDED/INJURED US	696
KILLED COALITION	119
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	357
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,587
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS	≥ 3,485

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VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC

P.O. Box 42202, Santa Barbara, CA 93140

www.vuft.org

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LAST NAME: _____

First name, MI: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Years of Service: From Mo/Day/Yr ___/___/____. To Mo/Day/Yr ___/___/____

Dues Enclosed: 1 Year (\$20) _____ Lifetime (\$100) _____

Additional Donation: _____

I would like to serve on the following committee(s) [optional]:

Finance

Fundraising

Organization Building

Other states

Growth/Outreach

Veterans & Other Veterans' Groups

Events

Planning and execution

Communication

Website, Media Contact

Materials

Posters, Flyers, etc. production

Message

Writing, editing, newsletter

Local Organizing

Form community group

REMARKS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: ___/___/____