

SOUND OFF!



VOL. III, NO 6

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”

10 NOVEMBER 2007

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

MEMORIALS ARE OFTEN MASKS FOR REAL CARE

I have rung this bell before, but memorials to the dead just piss me off! Not because the dead don't deserve it – they generally do. Not because we veterans don't want to remember our fallen brothers and sisters – nothing could be further from the truth.

What pisses me off is that memorials are a convenient way for those who did not place themselves at risk to claim that they have participated. By building a monument or giving some “patriotic” speech “In Memoriam”, they can claim that they have done their duty. They aren't really lying, because they seem to believe it themselves.

Memorials are for us only one part of our lives; an important part, but just a part.

The beauty of the Vietnam Memorial, now 25 years old, is not just that it is a grand architectural tribute to sacrifice, but that it contains the names. It is the names that make it important to us. We remember them, not in the abstract – not as “the fallen” – but as our friends and companions in a bloody business.

But we must not use the memorials, and we certainly must not use the “patriotic” speeches, in lieu of doing something real about those who still are with us.

In a recent movie, *“The History Boys”*, a young teacher talks to his students about just this subject, when he says,

“Truth was that in 1914 Germany doesn't want war. Yeah, there's an arms race but Britain is leading.

So, Why does no one admit this? That's why (pointing at a World War I memorial statue).

The dead – the body count. [It's alright not] to admit that the war is even partly our fault, because so many of our people died.

And all the mourning veils the truth. It's not ‘Lest we forget.’, it's ‘Lest we remember.’

See, that's what it's all about. The memorials – the cenotaphs – the two minute's silence.

For there is no better way of forgetting something than by commemorating it.”

As a people – as a nation – when it comes to veterans we more or less address those things that we can see, or rather those things that

we cannot hide. A young soldier has lost a leg, we provide a prosthetic. Another young soldier has lost his or her sight, we provide training and a guide dog (although lately we have asked volunteers to make that pricy contribution for us). But when young soldiers lose their ability to relate to normal society, or if they lose their grounding in their own humanity, this is off our radar screen. We can ignore it because it is not physically apparent. When confronted with it, we can even hint that it is perhaps un-American to be wounded in spirit, thus the fault must lie with the individual veteran, never with society.

In a marvelous book *“On Killing”*, a book that should be read by all, especially by those who think that psychological trauma must be the soldier's fault, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, an expert on PTSD, says,

“In many ways it is simply too painful for society to address what it does when it sends its young men off to kill other young men in distant lands. And what is too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget. ... [quoting Peter Marin] “we seem unable to deal with [a veteran's] moral pain or guilt. Instead it is treated as a neurosis or a pathology, ‘something to escape rather than something to learn from, a disease rather than – as it may well be for the vets – an appropriate if painful response to the past.”

In another story from World War I, one which I have quoted before, the mother of a dead British soldier – her favorite son – spends the day on which she learns of his death writing letters for the wounded in hospital. When asked why she stayed, she says,

“The dead must wait on the living.”

This Veterans Day let's use our time for good. Spend that time that you need to memorialize your brothers and sisters, then get something done for those who are still with us and are wounded in both body and spirit. Let's really honor those who are gone by tending to their comrades who stay with us and are wounded in many ways..

Today's veterans are those who raced toward the sound of battle while many cowered in fear. Remember all of them, alive and dead!

Tend to the living, and keep the dead in your heart. [Ed.]

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

NEED LEGAL HELP IN AN APPEAL TO THE DVA?

Try these two websites: Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program <http://www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm>. United States Court of appeals for Veterans Claims “Public List of Practitioners” are members of the court’s bar <http://www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/>

WAKE UP! SPREAD THE NEWS!

MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN, FREE, AND VERY WORTHWHILE! GET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS, AND VETERANS’ FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN VUFT! WE ARE BEGINNING TO BE HEARD, AND WE NEED YOU TO HELP US GET THE MESSAGE OUT. IF EACH OF US WOULD BRING IN ONE NEW MEMBER EVERY MONTH, WHAT AN IMPACT WE COULD HAVE!

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE!

Please check the website at www.vuft.org. We have revised it and are regularly adding useful references.

GETTING HELP TO THOSE WHO NEED IT

Many sites provide links to national organizations that help veterans. We believe that the best help comes at the local level. Sometimes this help comes from local chapters of national organizations, but more than likely it is from a group of local citizens, incorporated or loosely organized, who just plain want to help, and are willing to take the time and make the sacrifice to help out. These local organizations are hard to ferret out, but if you have them in your area, you know who they are.

Help us to start cataloging these local and regional groups across the nation. If you know of a group, or are the member of such a group, let us know and we will enter your group into our registry. The registry is open only to groups or agencies who will help veterans and their families without profit. If there are charges, let us know that also so that we can make your entry in the registry complete. The registry will be available to all who access our website.

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

THE FIGHT IS ON! The [law suit](#) that we have filed along with Veterans for Common Sense against the Veterans’ Administration proceeds slowly. There are new [documents](#) on the lawsuit concerning disclosures on our website.

BE A MEMBER If you are getting this newsletter and have not yet joined, please go to [our website](#) and join. Membership is free. The more our numbers grow, the greater voice we have. It shouldn’t be that way, but it is, so join us and help us take the fight to Congress and the state legislatures. Please encourage your friends who either are veterans, are related to veterans, or who support veterans’ causes to join VUFT, Inc.

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE If you wish to donate to our work you may now do so via PayPal or Visa on [our website](#) “[Join](#)” page. Every little bit helps. We are a 501(c)(3): your donations are deductible on your federal taxes. You can also buy our handsome pins using the same method. If you wish to volunteer your services to the organization, please contact the Chair at rhandy@vuft.org or the Vice Chair at scook@vuft.org. Watch for details at www.vuft.org

WE NEED YOUR HELP. VUFT is a no-fee organization. We must raise money to keep the effort going. Normal expenses have been borne out of the pockets of a very few board members, plus a few small donations over the two plus years of our existence. Although our legal defense in the current case is *pro bono*, we expect to incur expenses in support of the case, to include travel expenses should we need to testify. We also are incurring expenses in our effort to expand to all fifty states. Please consider [donating](#) whatever you can to VUFT ~ all donations are tax deductible to the donor.

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY!

A MEMBER HAS OFFERED TO MATCH YOUR DONATION, DOLLAR- FOR-DOLLAR, UP TO A TOTAL OF \$1,000, BETWEEN NOW AND THANKSGIVING. - **IT’S TIME TO PITCH IN!**

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

“SOLDIERS ARE A FUNGIBLE COMMODITY”: Donald Rumsfeld, April 2004

fun.gi.ble (adj.) \ funjəb'1 \ – interchangeable with other identical items [like Big Macs or wood screws]

NOTE from a Reserve Officer

A group of Civil Affairs Reservists in Texas were called to their weekend drill with the instructions that they would conduct the weekend drill and then would stay for normal annual two week training then would deploy to Afghanistan. On last Friday, the day before the drill, they were notified that the orders had not been cut and they would probably be bumped to a January deployment, or maybe December.

I wonder how many had shipped the wife and kids home to grandma, had given their bosses notice, had turned in their leased car, had given their landlord notice and moved out, had arranged for the myriad financial matters that were dependent on their deploying, and how many of them are now screwed – once again. Happy Veterans' Day – Oh! You wanted a paycheck?! Fuhgedaboutit! [Ed.]

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

\$471 BILLION, “WAR ON TERROR” NOT INCLUDED

Maya Schenwar – truthout - 07 November 2007

In a closed session on Tuesday, a Congressional appropriations conference committee approved \$471 billion in defense spending for 2008, a 9.5 percent increase over last year. Although a separate bill allocating war funds will probably follow soon, Democrats succeeded in keeping money specifically for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan out of this general defense appropriations bill. Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) raised an amendment in conference to add a \$70 billion "bridge fund" for the "war on terror" to the bill, but the proposal was defeated with a vote along party lines, according to Jesse Jacobs, press secretary for Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia).

"There is no new money for Iraq and Afghanistan," Jacobs said in an interview. "They will have to draw from what is already there." <More at: www.truthout.org/docs_2006/110707A.shtml>

H.R. 513: NATIONAL HEROES CREDIT PROTECTION ACT

A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (Sponsor: [Rep. Robert Brady \[D-PA\]](#)) to enhance the protection of credit ratings of members of the reserve component who serve on active duty in support of a contingency operation, and for other purposes. <More at: www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-513&tab=summary>

EVEN CUT 50 PERCENT, EARMARKS CLOG A MILITARY BILL

MARILYN W. THOMPSON and RON NIXON - November 4, 2007

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3 — Even though members of Congress cut back their pork barrel spending this year, House lawmakers still tacked on to the military appropriations bill \$1.8 billion to pay 580 private companies for projects the Pentagon did not request. Twenty-one members were responsible for about \$1 billion in earmarks, or financing for pet projects, according to data lawmakers were required to disclose for the first time this year. Each asked for more than \$20 million for businesses mostly in their districts, ranging from major military contractors to little known start-ups. The list is topped by the veteran earmark champions Representative John P. Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat who is the chairman of the powerful defense appropriations subcommittee, and Representative C. W. Bill Young, of Florida, the top Republican on the panel, who asked for \$166 million and \$117 million respectively. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/washington/04 earmarks.html>

HOUSE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PASSES THE FAIR BENEFITS FOR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

November 7, 2007 - Washington, D.C. – Today, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee led by Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA), approved H.R. 3882, the Fair Benefits for Guard and Reserve Act. The bill assists our nation's Guard and Reserve forces in obtaining active duty education benefits for their extended service in Iraq. <More at: www.vawatchdog.org/07/hcva07/hcva110707-1.htm>

RETREAT – NEWS

VCS LAWSUIT SUBJECT OF TV NEWS PROGRAM - Follow-up to our bulletin # 17

Paul Sullivan and Gordon Erspamer were interviewed a few weeks ago by SBS-Dateline (a major Australian TV program) about our PTSD class action lawsuit against VA. The program is called "International Dateline: Forgotten Soldiers" and will air on the U.S. West Coast starting November 8 through November 11. For the Pacific Time Zone, the program will air Saturday and Sunday at 8:00 a.m. For the Eastern Time Zone, the program will air on Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Showings will be on LinkTV which is available on both satellite systems, and on some cable systems in major cities. <More at: www.linktv.org/programs/date_78>

ONE DOWN: OBSCENELY DECADENT WAR PROFITEER HAULED OFF IN HANDCUFFS

Sarah Anderson – AlterNet - October 26, 2007.

It looks like the party may be over for one corporate crook. America's most ostentatious war profiteer is no longer a free man. In a long-anticipated move, FBI agents arrested bulletproof vest maker David H. Brooks in his Manhattan apartment at dawn on Thursday. In the tradition of Al Capone, Brooks was nabbed on allegations of financial shenanigans, despite strong suspicions that the defense contractor has much more serious crimes on his hands.

... What makes Brooks' greed particularly obscene is that the bullet-proof vests that boosted his fortunes in the first place turned out to be not so bulletproof after all. In May 2005, the U.S. Marines recalled more than 5,000 DHB armored vests after they failed ballistics tests for stopping 9 mm bullets. <More at: www.alternet.org/workplace/66182>

DEFENSE CONTRACT AWARD PROTESTED

Walter F. Roche Jr. - Los Angeles Times Staff Writer - October 26, 2007

WASHINGTON -- A Defense Department medical services contract worth up to \$790 million was awarded last month to a Wisconsin-based company three months after it hired a former Bush administration appointee who had supervised military health programs at the Pentagon for the last six years.

William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of Defense for health affairs from 2001 until April, joined Logistics Health Inc. as a director and consultant in June. The firm beat out two other bidders with proposals that ranged from \$80 million to \$100 million less, records show. Under the new contract, Logistics Health will provide immunizations and physical and dental exams for reservists and National Guard members. Logistics Health of LaCrosse, Wis., is headed by another ex-official of the Bush administration -- former Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson.

<More at: www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-medical26oct26.1.3978448.story>

WITH TWO MONTHS TO GO – 1026 FOR THE WHOLE YEAR??

2007 NOW THE DEADLIEST YEAR FOR U.S. TROOPS IN IRAQ

BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- Six U.S. troops were killed in Iraq on Monday, making 2007 the deadliest for the American military in the Iraq war. ... According to a CNN count of Pentagon figures, 855 U.S. service members have died so far in 2007. The next highest death toll was in 2004, when 849 were killed. <More at: www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/11/06/iraq.main/index.html>

TROOP CUTS IN GERMANY MAY BE DELAYED

Associated Press - October 30, 2007

WASHINGTON - The United States may delay a plan to reduce the number of its troops based in Germany, a military spokesman said Tuesday. The head of the U.S. European Command, Gen. Bantz Craddock, has recommended to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that two of four Army brigades in Europe be kept there a year or so longer than had been planned. Those brigades are currently based in Germany and have been rotating through Iraq. >More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,155103,00.html>

WHAT, AGAIN?

DOD LOOKS TO EASE RECRUITMENT STANDARDS

Associated Press - November 06, 2007

WASHINGTON - Faced with higher recruiting goals, the Pentagon is quietly looking for ways to make it easier for people with minor criminal records to join the military, The Associated Press has learned. The review, in its early stages, comes as the number of Army recruits needing waivers for bad behavior - such as trying drugs, stealing, carrying weapons on school grounds and fighting - rose from 15 percent in 2006 to 18 percent this year. And it reflects the services' growing use of criminal, health and other waivers to build their ranks.

Overall, about three in every 10 recruits must get a waiver, according to Pentagon statistics obtained by AP, and about two-thirds of those approved in recent years have been for criminal behavior. Some recruits must get more than one waiver to cover things ranging from any criminal record, to health problems such as asthma or flat feet, to low aptitude scores - and even for some tattoos. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,155644,00.html>

MAYBE THIS IS WHY??

ARMY HAS RECORD LOW LEVEL OF RECRUITS

Associated Press - November 01, 2007

WASHINGTON - The Army began its recruiting year Oct. 1 with fewer signed up for basic training than in any year since it became an all-volunteer service in 1973, a top general said Wednesday.

<More at: http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5i_zHgVIY5V8W88_zLgAQ3XgbrYwwD8SKFA6O0>

SO HOW WILL THIS FORECAST BE POSSIBLE?

MIDEAST WARS MAY LAST 50 YEARS

Associated Press - November 02, 2007

PITTSBURGH - It might take as long as half a century before U.S. troops can leave the volatile Middle East, according to retired Army Gen. John Abizaid.

"Over time, we will have to shift the burden of the military fight from our forces directly to regional forces, and we will have to play an indirect role, but we shouldn't assume for even a minute that in the next 25 to 50 years the American military might be able to come home, relax and take it easy, because the strategic situation in the region doesn't seem to show that as being possible,"

<More at: www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/11/01/abizaid_mideast_wars_may_last_50_years/>

BUT THIS NEWS FLASH SAYS THAT HE MAY BE RIGHT

A 3RD AFGHAN DISTRICT FALLS TO TALIBAN

Associated Press - November 06, 2007

KABUL, Afghanistan - Sixty Taliban militants on motorbikes and pickup trucks overran a district center in central Afghanistan overnight, firing on the town from a mountain outlook, pushing out the police and cutting off the town's main road, officials said. The district, in Day Kundi province, is the third that militants have overrun in the last week. Two districts in the western province of Farah are also in Taliban hands. <More at: www.therochesterdemocrat.com/index.php/test/print/a_3rd_afghan_district_falls_to_taliban/>

OF COURSE THERE ALWAYS IS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY – INDENTURED SERVITUDE

COMBAT VETERAN STUDENTS REDEPLOY TO IRAQ

Aaron J. Hoskins - November 05, 2007

For Marine Sgt. Kurt Hogan, San Diego State University offered an ideal place to pursue a college degree and return to civilian life after two deployments to Iraq. Hogan, 23, transferred to SDSU for the fall semester from San Diego Mesa College to study International Security and Conflict Resolution (ISCOR). He enrolled in a full load of classes and took a staff position in the Veterans Affairs Office assisting other combat veterans transition to campus life.

However, his own transition is now on hold. Hogan withdrew from classes last week and left on Monday, Nov. 5, to begin training for his third deployment to Iraq. He represents a growing number of combat veterans whose education at San Diego State University has been interrupted to return to war. <More at: www.sdsuniverse.info/story.asp?id=60445>

ANYONE HERE FEEL A DRAFT?

Lisa Hoffman - November 6, 2007

The chatter has begun again: Plans are afoot to revive the national military draft. In the past, these rumors have risen from the ranks of those opposed to the war in Iraq, who used the specter of the draft to gin up support for their side.

Now, it's some of those who are doing the fighting who are asking if a draft might be necessary, given the enormous strain the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts are putting on the nation's troops.

Resentment is growing that 99 percent of the country has not personally been touched by the war, while the all-volunteer forces and their families are bearing the entire burden. And some officers have begun to complain that the lowering of standards in order to enlarge the pool of enlistees is bringing in a lower quality of recruits. <More at: www.capitolhillblue.com/cont/node/3705>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

| Date | Time | Where | What | Who | Notes |
|----------|----------------|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 11/8-12 | | Everhart Museum Scranton, PA | Wall that Heals | | |
| 11/9 | | Las Cruces, NM | Resource Fair | Susan Campbell | 505-523-2219 |
| 11/9 | | Roanoke, VA | Resource Fair | Gayle Sanford | 540-982-2463 x1230 |
| 11/9 | | Albuquerque, NM | Resource Fair | Larry J. Campos | 505-841-8517 |
| 11/10 | | Los Angeles, CA | Resource Fair | Doris Nickelson | 310-518-1855 |
| 11/13 | | Mankato, MN | Resource Fair | Kara Cornils | 651-292-0145 |
| 11/14 | | Dallas, TX | Resource Fair | Greta Mankins | 214-857-0374 |
| 11/14 | | Cleveland, OH | Resource Fair | David Budzik | 216-420-7845 |
| 11/14 | 1100 - 1400 | Renaissance Dallas Richardson Hotel 900 East Lookout Dr. Richardson, TX | Career Fair | | 972-367-2000 |
| 11/15-16 | | Shreveport, LA | Resource Fair | Carolyn Green | 318-841-4812 |
| 11/16 | 1100 - 1400 | Crowne Plaza Austin 6121 N IH 35, Austin - Fort Hood, TX | Career Fair | | 512 323-5466 |
| 11/17 | | Inverness, FL | Resource Fair | John Young | 352-628-4357 |
| 11/19 | | Freeport, NY | Resource Fair | Edward Aulman | 516-572-8452 |
| 11/18 | | Hideout , 1354 Wabansia Chicago-Bucktown, IL 60622 | IVAW Fundraiser | Richard Stacewicz | 773-276-4189 |

Let us know about meetings and gatherings and we will advertise them

Note: We are a non-partisan organization that does not take a position, as an organization, on this war. We will advertise all legitimate veterans' events, regardless of purpose.

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

A REASON TO QUESTION THE SIX-MONTH LIMITATION ON IDENTIFYING PTSD

Grayson, KY - Some tense moments and relived horrors last night for an 86-year old World War Two veteran in rural Carter County. Local law enforcement officials say the elderly soldier had a recent operation replacing his pacemaker and had been having "difficulties" ... difficulties that - officials say - included "flashbacks" of his experiences in the Pacific in the early to mid 1940s.

Officials say the elderly man got emotional last night and thought his home had been surrounded by Japanese forces. They say he got his revolver out thinking he needed to defend his home and family. <More at: www.wkyt.com/news/headlines/10995536.html>

IRAQ, AFGHAN VETS AT RISK FOR SUICIDES

KIMBERLY HEFLING - Oct 31 '07

WASHINGTON (AP) - Mary Gallagher did not get a knock at the door from a military chaplain with news of her Marine husband's death in a faraway place. Instead, the Iraq war veteran committed suicide eight months after returning home. She is left wondering why. It's a question shared by hundreds of families of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who have taken their own lives in a homecoming suicide pattern of a magnitude that is just starting to emerge.

Preliminary Veterans Affairs Department research obtained by The Associated Press reveals for the first time that there were at least 283 suicides among veterans who left the military between the start of the war in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2001 and the end of 2005.

... Today's home front suicide tally is running at least double the number of troop suicides in the war zones as thousands of men and women return with disabling injuries and mental health disorders that put them at higher risk. A total of 147 troops have killed themselves in Iraq and Afghanistan since the start of the wars, according to the Defense Manpower Data Center, which tracks casualties for the Pentagon.

Add the number of returning veterans and the finding is that at least 430 of the 1.5 million troops who have fought in the two wars have killed themselves over the past six years. And that doesn't include people like Gallagher's husband who committed suicide after their combat tours and while still in the military - a number the Pentagon says it doesn't track.

<More at: <http://apnews.myway.com/article/20071031/D8SK88300.html>>

VA SAYS 6 PERCENT OF COMBAT VETS HAVE TBIS

Rick Maze - Staff writer - Nov 4, 2007

About 6 percent of Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans seeking treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries, according to preliminary data released Friday. A VA mandatory screening program that took effect in April has looked at 61,285 veterans of the wars. Of those, 19.2 percent were identified on the screening questionnaire as potentially suffering from traumatic brain injuries and were referred for more tests.

While evaluation continues, VA spokeswoman Alison Aikele said officials believe, based on a smaller sample, that the final result about 5.8 percent will be diagnosed with TBI. <More at: www.armytimes.com/news/2007/11/military_TBI_numbers_071102w/>

THIS STORY FROM TUCSON ABOUT PTSD SAYS THE REAL NUMBERS MAY BEAT THE "OFFICIAL" NUMBERS BY A LONG SHOT

MORE ARIZONA VETS SEEKING TREATMENT FOR PTSD AP

SHERYL KORNMAN - Tucson Citizen - November 4th, 2007

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) - Arizona Army National Guard Sgt. Lisa Hernandez rocks back and forth and tears begin to fall as she talks about her effort to return to civilian life after returning to Tucson from Iraq two months ago. Hernandez, 38, is divorced with sole custody of the four children she left behind when she was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is one of 462 war veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder from among the 1,483 veterans who have sought medical care at the Southern Arizona Veterans Affairs medical facility in Tucson between Oct. 1, 2006, and Sept. 30, 2007.

Nationwide, the number of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans diagnosed with PTSD at VA medical facilities jumped by nearly 70 percent in the 12 months ending June 30, 2007. <More at: <http://ktar.com/?nid=6&sid=637573>>

THEY HAVE ALWAYS DISAGREED IN THE PAST – MAYBE THIS TIME!!!

VA AND DOD PILOT SINGLE PHYSICAL

November 7, 2007

One Exam Used for "Fitness for Duty" and Disability Pay

WASHINGTON – In a landmark agreement to simplify life for service members with medical problems as they leave the military and return to the civilian world, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) signed a memorandum to pilot a single physical examination to be used by both Departments.

"This agreement commits VA and DoD to develop a single process to assess the medical conditions of wounded, injured or ill service members," said Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield. "We will make it easier for these heroes to go back to their homes, with the key questions about their eligibility for VA compensation already decided."

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/07/vap07/vap110707-1.htm>

IT'S ABOUT BLOODY TIME! NOW, STOP THE ASSAULTS IN THE FIRST PLACE!

NEW CENTER AIDS ASSAULTED FEMALE VETS

United Press International - October 29, 2007

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. -- A Veterans Administration treatment center is set to open in Bernards Township, N.J., to help female veterans who have been sexually assaulted. The Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger said Sunday that with the number of assault and harassment cases involving female soldiers increasing dramatically, the new center will provide treatment to those suffering from a condition known as military sexual trauma. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,155011,00.html>

NOT SEMI-SOLDIERS

Anna Quindlen – NEWSWEEK – Nov 3, 2007

It's no longer a question of whether women should be in combat. It's a matter of the regulations catching up with the reality.

When Leigh Ann Hester came home from Iraq she put grenade pins on her key ring. They were souvenirs of the Sunday morning in March 2005 when she and her Kentucky National Guard unit were tailing a supply convoy outside Baghdad. As many as 50 insurgents with submachine guns and rockets began to fire from an orchard and trenches along the road. The Americans pulled their Humvees over, and Sergeant Hester and S/Sgt. Timothy Nein crawled into one of the trenches. She shot a rifle while he lobbed grenades, then she threw while he fired. In 25 minutes the squad had killed 27 insurgents. Leigh Ann Hester, then age 23, was awarded the Silver Star for exceptional valor, the first woman ever to receive the honor for offensive action against the enemy. Which is remarkable, considering the regulations designed to keep people like Sergeant Hester out of combat.

<More at: www.newsweek.com/id/67917>

HOMELESS IN AMERICA: 1 IN 4 ARE VETS

Associated Press - November 08, 2007

WASHINGTON - Veterans make up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they are only 11 percent of the general adult population, according to a report released Nov. 8. And homelessness is not just a problem among middle-age and elderly veterans. Younger veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are trickling into shelters and soup kitchens seeking services, treatment or help with finding a job.

The Veterans Affairs Department has identified 1,500 homeless veterans from the current wars and says 400 of them have participated in its programs specifically targeting homelessness.

The Alliance to End Homelessness, a public education nonprofit, based the findings of its report on numbers from Veterans Affairs and the Census Bureau. 2005 data estimated that 194,254 homeless people out of 744,313 on any given night were veterans. In comparison, the VA says that 20 years ago, the estimated number of veterans who were homeless on any given night was 250,000.

Some advocates say such an early presence of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan at shelters does not bode well for the future.

<More at: <http://kdka.com/topstories/Veterans.homeless.United.2.559983.html>>

MORE RESERVISTS REPORT JOB PROBLEMS

HOPE YEN - Associated Press Writer - November 8, 2007

WASHINGTON (AP) - Strained by extended tours in Iraq, growing numbers of military reservists say the government is providing little help to soldiers who are denied their old jobs when they return home, Defense Department data shows. The Pentagon survey of reservists in 2005-2006, obtained by The Associated Press, details increasing discontent among returning troops in protecting their legal rights after taking leave from work to fight for their country.

It found that 44 percent of the reservists polled said they were dissatisfied with how the Labor Department handled their complaint of employment discrimination based on their military status, up from 27 percent from 2004. Nearly one-third, or 29 percent, said they had difficulty getting the information they needed from government agencies charged with protecting their rights, while 77 percent reported they didn't even bother trying to get assistance in part because they didn't think it would make a difference.

<More at: www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-7060890,00.html>

AND AROUND THE COUNTRY THE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO COLLAPSE

VETERANS FACE HURDLES GETTING TRANSPORTATION TO RENO FOR MEDICAL CARE

Adam Jensen - November 5, 2007

With Veterans Day less than a week away, former servicemen at the South Shore are hoping to re-establish regular transportation to medical care at the A. Lougaris Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Reno. A U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs-sponsored van stopped running in July 2005 because of a lack of properly qualified volunteer drivers.

"The van service is a courtesy to veterans; it is not a veterans' entitlement," said Alilia McNeal, spokeswoman for the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System. " <More at: www.tahoedailytribune.com/article/20071105/NEWS/111050060/-1/rss02>

A POST-IRAQ G.I. BILL

Jim Webb and Chuck Hagel - November 9, 2007

MEMBERS of Congress and other political leaders often say that the men and women who have served in our military since 9/11 are the "new greatest generation." Well, here's a thought from two infantry combat veterans of the Vietnam era's "wounded generation": if you truly believe that our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are like those who fought in World War II, let us provide them with the same G.I. Bill that was given to the veterans of that war.

In terms of providing true opportunity, the World War II G.I. Bill was one of the most important pieces of legislation in our history. It paid college tuition and fees, bought textbooks and provided a monthly stipend for eight million of the 16 million who served. Many of our colleagues in the Senate who before the war could never have dreamed of college found themselves at some of the nation's finest educational institutions. Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey went to Columbia on the G.I. bill; John Warner of Virginia to Washington and Lee and the University of Virginia Law School; Daniel Inouye of Hawaii to the University of Hawaii and the George Washington University Law School; and Ted Stevens of Alaska to UCLA, and Harvard Law School.

Veterans today have only the Montgomery G.I. Bill, which requires a service member to pay \$100 a month for the first year of his or her enlistment in order to receive a flat payment for college that averages \$800 a month. This was a reasonable enlistment incentive for peacetime service, but it is an insufficient reward for wartime service today. It is hardly enough to allow a veteran to attend many community colleges. It would cover only about 13 percent of the cost of attending Columbia, 42 percent at the University of Hawaii, 14 percent at Washington and Lee, 26 percent at U.C.L.A. and 11 percent at Harvard Law School.

<More at: www.nytimes.com/2007/11/09/opinion/09webb.html>

AIRLINES OPEN THE GATES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Erin Murphy - xksandiego

Military family members soar to new heights as the Transportation Security Administration approves gate passes for military family members accompanying their departing or returning service members. Family members can now go through security checkpoints and to the gate, depending on the airport and airline reservation. Sharie Shipley, spokesperson for the San Diego International Airport, assumes most airlines will adhere to the new procedure, but recommends individuals check with airline managers prior to arriving at the airport. Passes are obtained through each individual airline. Airlines exercise discretion as to who qualifies as a family member. Military photo identification must be shown to obtain gate passes.

<More at: www.xksandiego.com/cms/newsletter.php?newsletter=Veterans&area=display_record&arid=1587>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF NOVEMBER 7, 2007

This week, the Air Force announced an increase, while the Army and Marine Corps announced a decrease. The net collective result is 636 less reservists mobilized than last week. At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 72,642; Navy Reserve, 5,895; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,113; Marine Corps Reserve, 7,265; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 347. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been mobilized to 93,262, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2007/d20071107ngr.pdf

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2007

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| KILLED US | 3,859 |
| WOUNDED US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1] | 28,451 |
| OTHER US CASUALTIES [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1] | ≥29,584 |
| DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1] | 128 |
| MISSING OR CAPTURED US | 4 |
| KILLED UK | 171 |
| KILLED OTHER COALITION | 133 |
| WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION | 819 |
| **KILLED CONTRACTORS [LAST DoD UPDATE 6/30] | 1,001 |
| KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY | ≥ 47,555 |
| KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS | ≥ 83,175 [LANCET-1,104,276] |
| WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS | ≥ 400,000+ [LANCET- 1,414,723] |
| IRAQ REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL [9/15] | 2.1M/2.5M |

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| KILLED US (10/24/2007) | 459 |
| *OTHER CASUALTIES US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/2007] | 7,720 |
| KILLED COALITION (6/2007) | 278 |
| WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2006) | 1,472 |
| KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY | ≥ 8,619 |
| KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (JULY 2004) | ≥ 3,525 |
| WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (7/2004) | 32,034 |
| AFGHAN REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL | 1.75M/4.8M |
| COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE [11/9] | \$467,267,368,415 |

NOTE: SOME NUMBERS DO NOT CHANGE BETWEEN ISSUES BECAUSE UPDATED FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESS TIME

* This entry has been changed to "Non-mortal casualties" which includes wounded, non-hostile casualties, and diseased where medical air transport was required. To see detailed demographic data on the casualties go to <http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/casop.htm>

** Includes 280 additional contractor casualties reported in international press but not in US official figures

AFTERTHOUGHTS ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

TEN BOOKS THAT TELL THE TALE [with Amazon links for ordering the books]:

[On Killing](#): *The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*; LTC Dave Grossman

[On Combat](#): *The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace*; LTC Dave Grossman

[Achilles in Vietnam](#): *Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*; Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D.

[Odysseus in America](#): *Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*; Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D.

[War and the Soul](#): *Healing our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*; Edward Tick, Ph.D.

[When the War Came Home](#): *The inside Story of Reservists and the Families They Leave Behind*; Stacy Bannerman

[Moving a Nation to Care](#): *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and America's Returning Troops*; Ilona Meagher

[The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell](#): *An Accidental Soldier's Account of the War in Iraq*; John Crawford

[Down Range](#): *to Iraq and Back*; Bridgett C. Cantrell, Ph.D. & Chuck Dean

[The War I Always Wanted](#): *The Illusion of Glory and the Reality of War*; Brandon Friedman

Read these ten books and you will begin to understand the magnitude and the character of the problems our returning troops are facing, and why we must face up to those problems to save our brothers and sisters. There are others, but these ten will give you the grounding you need in the subject. Read them, then turn your knowledge into action!

DVDs TO VIEW AND OWN [With links for ordering]

[Gunner Palace](#): (2004) Nomados Film

[Iraq for Sale](#): (2006) BraveNew Films

[End Game](#): (2006) PBS Home Video/Frontline

[The Ground Truth](#): (2006) Universal

[The War Tapes](#): (2006) Docurama

[Ghosts of Abu Ghraib](#): (2007) HBO/Moxie Firecracker Films *If you host a screening the DVD is [available at discount](#).*

[No End in Sight](#): (2007) Representational Pictures

THE WAR FROM THE IRAQI SIDE

[Iraq in Fragments](#): (2007) Typecast Films

AND FOR A REMINDER OF THE LAST COUNTER-INSURGENCY WAR [and why the more things change, the more they stay the same]

[Sir, No Sir!](#): (2006) Docurama

YOU TROOPS ARE FREE TO ENGAGE IN DEADLY COMBAT, YOU ARE FREE TO MARRY AND HAVE CHILDREN (NO SEX-FOR-PLEASURE PLEASE), YOU ARE FREE TO DRINK OFF DUTY, YOU CAN SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM, YOU CAN VOTE (WE CAN GIVE YOU A PROPER VOTING LIST), YOU ARE FREE TO BE AN ADULT

IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR READING MATTER. THAT IS WHERE WE MUST STEP IN AND SAVE YOU FROM HARM!

MILITARY'S PORN BAN QUESTIONED

Peter Eisler, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Ten years after Congress banned sales of sexually explicit material on military bases, the Pentagon is under fire for continuing to sell adult fare, such as Penthouse and Playmates In Bed, that it doesn't consider explicit enough to pull from its stores.

Dozens of religious and anti-pornography groups have complained to Congress and Defense Secretary Robert Gates that a Pentagon board set up to review magazines and films is allowing sales of material that Congress intended to ban.

"They're saying 'we're not selling stuff that's sexually explicit' ... and we say it's pornography," says Donald Wildmon, head of the American Family Association, a Christian anti-pornography group. A letter-writing campaign launched Friday by opponents of the policy aims to convince Congress to "get the Pentagon to obey the law," he adds.

ON DEADLINE: Dept. of Defense responds

In an Aug. 15 letter to the groups, Leslye Arsht, a deputy undersecretary of Defense, said the Pentagon's Resale Activities Board of Review uses appropriate guidelines to review material for sale.

This year, the board reviewed Penthouse and several Playboy publications and determined that "based solely on the totality of each magazine's content, they were not sexually explicit," Arsht wrote. However, the board did decide to bar the sale of several videos found by the anti-pornography groups at military stores, including Girls Night In and Wet. <More at: http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-11-04-Militaryporn_N.htm>

ADD-ON ~

A VETERANS GROUP THAT MUST HATE VETERANS

November 05, 2007

The Pittsburgh Channel has the story of an investigative report by Channel 4 in that city about a charity (in name only) that is calling Pennsylvania donors, collecting tons of money, and spending mere pennies on the dollar on their charitable cause. The charity is Paralyzed Veterans of America, their fundraiser is Civic Development Group (unfortunately, of my state, New Jersey), and the story is sickening but all too common. The group has raised well in excess of \$5 million, and spent at least 85% of that on telemarketing fees.

The reporter from Channel 4 in Pittsburgh asked Joseph Dornbock, the director of the "charity" if donors should be concerned, saying "they probably think that donation, most of that money is going to be used by the paralyzed veterans, and it's really not, isn't it?"

Replied Dornbock: "It's a common misperception that there should be an overwhelming amount of every \$1. There are expenses along the way."

A "common misperception" that if you donate money to paralyzed veterans, that most of the money should get to, well, paralyzed veterans?

No. The only misperceptions here are that many donors still think that everyone in the charity world is out to help others, and that I thought I'd seen the depths that human beings could sink to in their quests to line their own pockets at the expense of good donors and needy recipients.

Please don't give to these telemarketing groups, especially those that purport to represent our veterans. 99 times out of 100, they're bogus telemarketers, representing only themselves, and they know that the nation is filled with sympathetic but unsuspecting donors who would never dream that the person on the other end of the telephone line isn't really as honorable or patriotic as the people they claim to be fundraising for (or from).

To find a reputable group helping our veterans, click [here](#) to learn more.

www.trentstampstake.org/2007/11/veterans-group-that-must-hate-veterans.html>

NOTICE

If at any time you cannot open a link in this newsletter to an article or web page that interests you, please let me know at scook@vuft; I keep a copy of most of the full articles, or can research an alternative route to the information. [Ed.]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: I have been asked what guides my selection of articles. In general, I try to stick with articles that deal exclusively with our target group: serving military, veterans, retirees, and their families. I also favor articles that deal with the effect of Legislative or Executive inaction or bad actions that adversely affect our target group. I try not to pick those articles that have already been beaten to death in the regular press, but rather try to bring the reader articles that he or she might not run across in another medium. While we are non-partisan, I do not believe articles critical of government actions to be partisan as long as they are accurate and fair. Criticism, like dissent, is fair. Finally, I screen hundreds of articles for inclusions and for every article I include, I throw five or six away – good articles, but not as important as the ones selected.

I always appreciate contributions, whether it is opinion in Letter-to-the-Editor form, or articles that the reader believes would be good for our readership. Since I get a chance to vent once in awhile in these newsletters, I will certainly consider Op-Ed copy for inclusion. I always welcome reader comment or complaint. [Sandy Cook](#), Editor