

SOUND OFF!



VOL. VI, NO 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”

20 SEPTEMBER 2010

FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

WE’RE BACK ~ AND WE’RE PISSED OFF!

Throughout the combined Afghanistan/Iraq conflicts the American public hasn’t been very much involved. Other things have been more important, such as watching the numerous non-real reality shows, or complaining that their taxes are too high.

Somewhere along the line, Americans forgot that when we fight wars we are fighting for them. It doesn’t matter if the war is warranted or not, our Armed Forces are still fighting in our name.

If we don’t want them to fight unwarranted wars then we have to solve that on the political front. But if the government we elect sends them into battle, we incur a huge obligation.

Because our Armed Forces are doing something very real for us, we ought to be doing something very real for them. Isn’t that the American way? “You watch my back and I’ll watch yours.”

Our service members give up a huge portion of their young lives, deploy repeatedly, struggle in many cases to keep a family together even when one or perhaps both parents are deployed.

Their education is delayed or interrupted, while their non-serving contemporaries go blissfully along completing their educations, getting a job (although not always) and advancing in the ranks at their employment and in the community.

How do they get repaid? It seems that many Americans think that they are getting too much!

Of course, I have written about this before, but it bears repeating. Being a soldier, marine, sailor or flyer is not just another job. They shouldn’t have to play by the same rules as other job holders, because they give more, and give it more often.

When our soldiers are engaged we seem to be willing to treat them marginally differently, although not necessarily better than other workers. When the noise and the smoke die down, however, we start carping at them as if they were somehow demanding something from us that they have not truly earned.

What’s wrong with us? Most especially, what is wrong with our “leaders” (quotation marks included because their qualification to lead are sadly wanting).

Our “leaders” have taken 40 years to finally come to grips, at least in part, with Agent Orange. What financial golden boy, or never-serving Harvard MBA was exposed to AO? Even now, there is a reluctance to consider more possible AO-related diseases.

With that record, our “leaders” can be expected to take another 20 years at least to come to grips with the Gulf War Syndrome. It’s only been 19 years so far.

There has been almost no attention paid to the effects of Depleted Uranium,, but DU is affecting many, particularly the children of those who have been exposed to DU, to include the inhabitants of the countries where we have so liberally laced the ground with DU residue. That will probably take another full 40 years, but only if someone gets moving on it now.

There have been those who point out that by taking so much time (they call it reasonable scrutiny) they reduce the problem; since so many who have been exposed to the various poisons of war conveniently pass away, thus eliminating much of the problem.

Even when the problem is fairly well addressed, as most recently with AO, our “leaders” decide that 40 years is not enough so they must hold up the latest AO bill for 60 days further review. What’s to review that

hasn't already been reviewed many times over? (Yes, I am speaking to you Senator Webb (D-VA)).

When all the laws are passed the veteran still has to face the VA. We all know what the problem there is. It's not General Shinseki who seems to be striving mightily to get things moving. Rather it is the VA bureaucracy and the thousands of pages of rules that do not clarify the process, rather they confound it and all those attempting to get help. And, like the long delay permitting poisoned veterans to die, the long delays of the process permit claimants to die or they become weary and just give up.

As Nora Eisenberg recently reported the testimony of veterans at a Congressional hearing in late July, "the agency is in the grips of a rogue bureaucracy that bypasses congressional oversight and sabotages veterans interests and health."

It's not just the civilians who never served who are shafting the veterans. Retired USMCR Major General Arnold Punaro, chairs a task force for the Defense Business Board that will deliver its final report to Defense Secretary Robert Gates in October. In his report he intends to make recommendations to reduce costs by reducing compensation and benefits, revising the promotion system, and changing retirement to a lower percentage of active duty pay. Thanks!

He is not alone. There are serving senior staff officers who believe that the way to protect the future of the service is to reduce the cost of having human beings in it. (MGEN Punaro quotes a serving four-star as saying that "DoD is turning into a benefits company that will occasionally kill a terrorist".

Nice to know your service is so well appreciated by the chain of command, isn't it?

Former Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY) who heads the President's deficit commission testified recently that a system that automatically awards disability benefits to some veterans because of concerns about Agent Orange seems contrary to efforts to control federal spending. Specifically he said, "The irony (is) that the veterans who saved this country are now, in a way, not helping us to save the country in this fiscal mess." Simpson is an Army veteran who was once chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

He further said, "It's the kind of thing that's just driving us to this \$1 trillion, \$400 billion deficit this year," Simpson said. "It's not that I'm an uncaring person, but common sense is the most uncommon thing in Washington."

Thanks Senator—we forgot that the deficit is more important than the lives of veterans.

Of course, multi-million bonuses out of tax dollars to financiers are not questioned: they only question a few thousand bucks being paid to a sick or injured veteran. Go figure!

May I please give all of you "leaders", including Senators Webb and Simpson, a hint that any child should be able to understand.

If you don't want to pay out all this money for veterans' benefits, stop making so many wounded, injured and poisoned veterans. Stop supporting the perpetual efforts by successive US governments to convert the world to American democracy by beating them into submission using the US military.

Bring 'em home, and don't send them out again unless we, or our true allies are threatened.

Don't send them out there to preserve and protect American business. If we have a free enterprise system then they should be able to compete without your help.

Don't send them out there to try to convert people with no sense of democratic government, no compunctions about corruption, no sense of human rights, and no understanding of your goals anyway, and try to turn them into surrogate "Little Americas". It hasn't worked, and it won't work.

Instead, start spending some of the billions we are wasting on those programs that will improve the lot of all Americans so much that others will, over time, attempt to emulate us. If our system is so great, then let's show the world just how great it is, and let them figure out for themselves that if they try something like it, things might get better for them.

Then they, just like us, can choose as they will to advance, stay still, or sink into the abyss of self-destruction.

We may all wish for the blessing of unfettered human rights for everyone—I certainly do—but we can't force it down their throats.

Take that approach, and we can reduce the military to the cadre necessary to protect us from legitimate threats.

This is not isolationism. We should be prepared to fight wherever our national security is threatened. We cannot fight all those places where our "interests" are threatened, however, so stop trying. Recognize the world, and incidentally human nature, for what it is, and let's get on with building and re-building America. Nothing could make us more secure.

Remember! For all of the rightness of our coming to the aid of the world in World War II, it wasn't beating everyone into submission that made us a world leader; it was the Marshall Plan and other like programs that showed the world that not only were we a good and just people, but that we were generous and forgiving victors. That's what made people want to be like us.

It is not enough that we mean well—we must also do well.

“The evil that is in the world almost always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence if they lack understanding.”

Albert Camus

So while you are at it, let's stop torturing; let's stop holding people in indefinite incarceration without trial; let's stop considering civilian “collateral damage” as acceptable; let's stop condoning corruption on the part of those we are trying to help.

Those acts are not only un-American, they are despicable and we don't want to be guilty of them, even if it is by association with those of you who somehow think they are OK.

You'll increase our security and lessen the need for military action. That'll save you a bundle.

“In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

[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 www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm. United States Court of appeals for Veterans Claims “Public List of Practitioners” are members of the court's bar www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/. Also this site for west coasters <http://www.chapman.edu/law/programs/clinics/amvets.asp>.

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

JUDGE RULES THAT MILITARY POLICY VIOLATES RIGHTS OF GAYS

John Schwartz - New York Times - September 9, 2010

The “[don't ask, don't tell](#)” policy toward gay members of the military is unconstitutional, a federal judge in California ruled Thursday. Judge Virginia A. Phillips of Federal District Court struck down the rule in an opinion issued late in the day. The policy was signed into law in 1993 as a compromise that would allow gay and lesbian soldiers to serve in the military. <More at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/us/10gays.html>>

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Your Board of Directors recently took an action concerning the above Federal Court decision (Log Cabin Republicans v. United States of American and Robert Gates) about which we must inform you. While the decision we have taken may displease some of our membership, nonetheless we felt compelled to do so.

Herewith our explanation in an attempt, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, “To place before [our membership] the common sense of the subject in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent.”

On 17 September the board voted to submit an *amicus curiae* brief to support the appeal being submitted by the Log Cabin Republicans, the winning plaintiff in the case, that Judge Phillips modify her decision and make it applicable everywhere.

Our decision was based on several key points:

First: if DADT is unconstitutional in California, it is, by definition unconstitutional everywhere. The Constitution itself explains the universality of federal law.

Second: we believe wholeheartedly that Judge Phillips was acting in accordance fully within the concept of *judicial review* as established in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).

Third: we believe that regardless of any vote of the Congress or the people, rights established in the Constitution are not subject to vote, otherwise individual rights would be at the mercy of the “tyranny of the majority”.

Fourth: in our devotion to truth about military service and the lives of veterans, we recognize that it is true that almost all of us have known gay and lesbian service members during our own service to the nation.

I say that we have known this to be true, not just suspected it to be true. None of us have known the presence of these gay members to have adversely affected the “morale, good order and discipline, unit cohesion” of our units; to the contrary, some of these veterans have been the best of our soldiers. (Sexual misconduct and rape by heterosexual service members have had deleterious effects wherever they have been condoned.

Fifth, and finally: service in the military is a service in a public trust, and commissioning of officers makes them “office holders” by definition. While recognizing the religious aversion to homosexuality of some of the public, we must follow the founders as stated in Article VI; “no Religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or Public Trust under the United States.” Thus, we cannot agree with any religious rationale for barring homosexuals from service; such a religious principle can only bar an adherent from personally partaking in homosexual acts or else foregoing his or her religious affiliation.

We hope that not only will the judge extend her opinion, but also that eventually DADT will be completely overturned, whether by the Congress or the courts.

Additionally, we support the correction of military records for all those who have been in the past separated under less than honorable conditions, including “undesirable” discharges, and that those of the current era who remain qualified for service and who desire to, may be reinstated in their parent service.

It is our belief that no matter what you believe personally, and no matter what you say, it is your acts that make you the kind of person you are. As an example, [Lt. Col \(USAF\) Victor Fehrenbach](#), who flew more than 90 missions in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, who has received multiple awards including an Air Medal for heroism, and who has served honorably for 19 years, is an asset to the United States Armed Forces not a detriment. We need more like him, regardless of sexual orientation.

We honor all of our brother and sister veterans when we honor a great airman like Lt. Col. Fehrenbach and so many others of our gay and lesbian fellow service members.

While the United States must make its own laws, we can look at the rest of our allies for examples of the effect of permitting homosexuals to serve. 22 of 26 NATO nations, all EU nations except Greece, 3 of 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council, and Israel permit such service to no apparent detriment. **Ed.**

VCS - VUFT LAWSUIT UPDATE:

Class Action Suit: On 12 August 2009 we appeared before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. An article from the LA Times on 24 August summarizes the results so far < <http://latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/healthcare/la-me-veterans-suit24-2009aug24.0.1423297.story>>

.Case Progress to Date:

7/23/2007 Suit filed w/Federal District Court
 9/25/2007 Defendant's Motion to Dismiss
 2/11/2208 Motion for Preliminary Injunction
 2/25/2008 Preliminary Injunction Hearing
 4/21/2008 Trial
 6/25/2008 Judgment based on jurisdiction

7/25/2008 Appeal notice filed w/9th Circuit Court of Appeals
 12/10/2008 Appeal brief filed
 12/15/2008 *Swords to Plowshares* and *Vietnam Veterans of America* file amicus briefs
 12/22/2008 *Military Spouses for Change* and *United Spinal Association* file amicus briefs
 3/4/2009 Appeal will not be subject to Mediation

4/6/2009 Requested an extension to reply to the DVA response to our brief
 4/22/09 Extension granted to 1 May 2009
 5/1/09 Appellants' Reply Brief filed
 6/11/09 Oral Arguments Scheduled for 12 August 2009
 8/12/09 Oral arguments
 9/14/09 Reply on mediation [changed date]
 9/14/09 No agreement on mediation. 9th Circuit accepts the case.
 7/20/10 **NTR [The courts move veeerrrry slowly] There is a rumor that we may yet be heard this session. NOTE: There is no first-in-first-out rule in the ccCourt of Appeals, and there is no time constraint on the court.**

Here is a link to the legal documents on the lawsuit. www.veteransptsdclassaction.org/

BE A MEMBER If you are getting this newsletter and have not yet joined, please go to www.vuft.org/membership.html 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. at www.vuft.org/membership.html

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE If you wish to donate to our work you may now do so via PayPal or Visa on our website "Donate" page at www.vuft.org/donate.html. 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.

P L E A S E D O N A T E !

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS [SOME EDITED FOR LENGTH]

I have never bought or rented a war video game for my 3 sons and do not want them in my home. But my youngest prevailed on my wife to rent one because all of his buddies were playing it on-line with the ability to communicate with each other. So when I got home I registered a protest for the record (my sister is a media expert and says this should always be done). But as I watched the game I slowly realized that my son and his buddies were pretending to be Japanese soldiers killing US Marines during World War II. I told my son that he was simulating killing his Grandfather and that this was unacceptable in my home and that he had to terminate the game immediately. He argued with me about it while continuing to play the game with and talk to his buddies. I pulled the plug on them all with no further argumentation. What type of sick and demented persons would develop a video game where young American Boys simulate killing their Grandfathers? What type of Society have we become? ~ Francis A. Boyle

WHY SHOULD SHE HAVE TO ASK FOR HELP FROM THE ORLANDO SENTINEL?

LONG WAIT FOR V.A. BENEFITS NEARING END FOR VETERAN'S WIDOW

Greg Dawson - The Last Resort - August 8, 2010

Dear Greg: My husband of 57 years, Joseph Suda, passed away on Feb. 27, 2008. He was in the army infantry in Italy in the Blue Devils company. As his widow, I called the Veterans Administration to obtain his pension benefit. About a week after his death, a lady came to my door at the Brookdale assisted living facility where we moved in 2006. She asked for our marriage license, my husband's death notice and discharge papers, and said I would be hearing from them. Well, a year went by and I didn't hear anything, so I called the V.A. and spoke to Tom, who said they lost the file but would keep looking for it. Another year slipped away without any word from the V.A., so my niece and I went down to the office. Tom said they found the file and all the information they needed, but still more time went by and it was 2010. I called Tom and asked how long it would be and he said another month. Another month went by and I called again. Lo and behold, they told me they lost the folder and everything in it again. In four months my money will be gone and I have to leave Brookdale. I have no place to go. I have no brother or sister and my parents are deceased. I'm 81 years old. I'm desperate. Where do I go? ~ *Geraldine Suda ~ Leesburg*

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

SENATE, HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES APPROVE RECORD HOMELESS VETERANS FUNDING

The Senate Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on Appropriations have approved record funding for homeless veterans in their fiscal year (FY) 2011 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations bills. Most notably, these bills include \$151 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program – the funding equivalent of about 20,000 vouchers – and \$220.6 and \$218 million, respectively, for the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program and program liaisons, which received \$150 million in funding in FY 2010. <More at: www.nchv.org/news_article.cfm?id=764>

AKAKA INTRODUCES BILL TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE TO VETERANS' CHILDREN UP TO 26-YEARS OF AGE

September 17, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) introduced a bill to extend the age limit for coverage of veterans' dependents through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) to the level set by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/10/scva10/scva091710-1.htm>

PROPOSALS TO SLASH VA FUNDING ARE WITHDRAWN AT LAST MINUTE

Billy House and Humberto Sanchez - CongressDaily - July 28, 2010

Three amendments submitted this week under the name of Minority Leader Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, to the House Rules Committee would have sliced proposed fiscal 2011 Veterans Affairs Department funding by more than \$52 million.

But all three amendments were abruptly withdrawn Tuesday, just moments before the committee was set to approve them for consideration Wednesday by the entire House. <More at: www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=45775&oref=todaysnews>

CONGRESS PROBES PRUDENTIAL'S SGLI PAYOUTS

Military.com - Bryant Jordan - August 26, 2010

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are putting Prudential Financial under the congressional microscope for the company's policy of placing the death benefit payments of fallen troops and veterans into interest-earning accounts instead of immediately turning the money over to the deceased's next-of-kin.

<More at: www.military.com/news/article/congress-probes-prudentials-sgli-payouts.html>

VETERANS AGENCY MADE SECRET DEAL OVER BENEFITS

David Evans - Sep 14, 2010

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs failed to inform 6 million soldiers and their families of an agreement enabling Prudential Financial Inc. to withhold lump-sum payments of life insurance benefits for survivors of fallen service members, according to records made public through a Freedom of Information request.

The amendment to Prudential's contract is the first document to show how VA officials sanctioned a payment practice that has spurred investigations by lawmakers and regulators. Since 1999, Prudential has used so-called retained-asset accounts, which allow the company to withhold lump-sum payments due to survivors and earn investment income on the money for itself. <More at: www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-14/veterans-agency-arranged-secret-deal-with-prudential-over-soldier-benefits.html>

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY BILL OFFERS WARRIORS NEW HOPE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla - PRNewswire-USNewswire - Sept. 15

Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN) introduc(ed) legislation today in the U.S. House of Representatives that would ensure fuller lives for warriors who sustained severe traumatic brain injuries (TBI) in Iraq and Afghanistan, H.R. 6123, the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvement Act of 2010 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide veterans who have severe TBI with ongoing, long-term rehabilitative care.

<More at: www.veteransresources.org/2010/09/traumatic-brain-injury-bill-offers-warriors-new-hope/>

RETREAT – NEWS

IRAQ, AFGHAN VETERANS CALL FOR RESPECT FOR MUSLIMS: 'AMERICA, YOU GOTTA HAVE OUR BACK' (EXCLUSIVE)

09-13-10

The push by some in the media against rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States gained valuable voices of support over the weekend -- and now joining that chorus are veterans who fought alongside U.S. servicemembers of Islamic faith in Iraq and Afghanistan. A small but growing group of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have signed onto an open letter ... which calls on the American public to respect "the values we risked our lives to protect" and to avoid endangering the mission -- and safety -- of U.S. forces in the Mideast. <More at: www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/13/veterans-muslims-respect-iraq-afghanistan_n_714646.html>

OCTOBER 1, 2010 IS THE DEADLINE

U.S. TROOPS HAVE LEFT \$324 MILLION IN BACK PAY UNCLAIMED

Craig Whitlock - Washington Post Staff Writer - September 4, 2010

Uncle Sam wants to give free, no-strings-attached money to about 145,000 troops who were involuntarily kept on duty after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, but is having trouble persuading them that it's not a gimmick.

<More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/04/AR2010090402549_pf.html>

FORCED U.S. MILITARY EXTENSIONS TO END

Tom Vanden Brook - USA TODAY – 8/14/10

WASHINGTON — The number of Army soldiers forced to serve beyond their commitment has been cut in half in the past year and is on track to be eliminated by March 2011, Pentagon records and interviews show. The practice known as "stop loss" affected more than 15,000 troops at its peak in 2005 and has been cut to about 4,000. Experts on military morale say the steady decline in forcing troops to serve has dampened the controversy, though they say the Pentagon delayed action.

<More at: www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-08-06-1Astoploss06_ST_N.htm>

ARE WE TOTALLY UNABLE TO CONTROL THIS ST?**

U.S. CONTRACTOR ACCUSED OF FRAUD STILL WINNING BIG AFGHAN PROJECTS

Marisa Taylor and Warren P. Strobel - McClatchy Newspapers - September 19, 2010

WASHINGTON — On July 31, 2006, an employee of the Louis Berger Group, a contractor handling some of the most important U.S. rebuilding projects in Afghanistan, handed federal investigators explosive evidence that the company was intentionally and systematically overbilling American taxpayers. Neither the whistleblower's computer disk full of incriminating documents nor a trail of allegations of waste, fraud and shoddy construction, however, prevented Louis Berger from continuing to reap hundreds of millions of dollars in federal contracts. In fact, two months after the government learned of the employee's allegations, the U.S. Agency for International Development tapped Louis Berger to oversee another \$1.4 billion in reconstruction contracts in Afghanistan. <More at: www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/09/19/v-print/100690/us-contractor-accused-of-fraud.html>

HERE'S WHERE THE REST OF THE MONEY WENT!

PENTAGON CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR \$8.7 B IN IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION MONEY

27 Jul 2010

A US audit has found that the Pentagon cannot account for more than 95 per cent of \$9.1 billion in Iraq reconstruction money. The report by the US Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction offers a compelling look at continued laxness in how such funds were being spent in a country where people complain basic services like electricity and clean water are sharply lacking seven years after the U.S.-led invasion.

<More at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/7913747/Pentagon-cannot-account-for-8.7-billion-in-iraq-reconstruction-money.html>

VETERANS AFFAIRS ISSUES AN IMPORTANT DIRECTIVE

Timothy Price-O'Brien - Roanoke Civil Liberties Examiner - July 27, 2010

This week, the Veterans Affairs Department is issuing a directive to allow veterans to use medical marijuana in the fourteen states where it is legal to prescribe it for medical purposes. Although the federal government still fails to recognize marijuana as a legal drug for any purpose, over a dozen states have decided that medical needs should outweigh concerns about its use. <More at: www.examiner.com/x-53247-Roanoke-Civil-Liberties-Examiner-y2010m7d27-Veterans-Affairs-issues-an-important-directive>

US MILITARY IN AFGHANISTAN UNCOVERS SADISTIC DEATH SQUAD IN RANKS

Ben Farmer - Kabul - 19 Sep 2010

FIVE American soldiers who formed themselves into a "death squad" go on trial this month for the murder and dismemberment of Afghan villagers. A US military investigation reported that the group randomly targeted civilians for sport. ... Bodies were cut up and photographed and the soldiers are said to have kept bones and a skull as trophies.

<More at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/8011815/US-military-in-Afghanistan-uncovers-sadistic-death-squad-in-ranks.html>

THE TRUE COST OF THE IRAQ WAR: \$3 TRILLION AND BEYOND

Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes - September 5, 2010; B04

[Writing in these pages](#) in early 2008, we put the total cost to the United States of the Iraq war at \$3 trillion. This price tag dwarfed previous estimates, including the Bush administration's 2003 projections of a \$50 billion to \$60 billion war. But today, as the United States ends combat in Iraq, it appears that our \$3 trillion estimate (which accounted for both government expenses and the war's broader impact on the U.S. economy) was, if anything, too low. For example, the cost of diagnosing, treating and compensating disabled veterans has proved higher than we expected.

<More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/03/AR2010090302200.html>

ARMY REPORT: AWOLS UP 234%

Aaron Glantz - August 12, 2010

Tucked into [this massive Army report on suicide](#) is an interesting fact: Since 2004, the number of soldiers going AWOL, deserting, and "missing movement" -- that is failing to deploy when they're supposed to -- has gone up a shocking 234 percent. ... "Good order and discipline are on the decline," the report says.

<More at: www.huffingtonpost.com/aaron-glantz/army-report-awols-up-234_b_680615.htm>

THIS IS ANOTHER LAW SUIT ~ THE GOVERNMENT IS FIGHTING IT, OF COURSE JUDGE EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR A CLASS-ACTION SUIT FOR VETERANS W/PTSD

Kimberly Dvorak - August 17th, 2010

A lawsuit was established to get much-needed care and monetary compensation for veterans who suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Middle East Wars has extended the deadline allowing more veterans to sign on to the pending litigation. The lawsuit was brought on behalf of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans by the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and pro-bono counsel Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP. Military veterans who were discharged between December 17, 2002 and October 14, 2008 are eligible to join the class-action lawsuit if they think they were short-changed with their military separation benefits. Judge George W. Miller of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims signed an order giving eligible veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan until November 10, 2010 to join (or "opt-in to") Sabo v. United States.

<More at: www.examiner.com/county-political-buzz-in-san-diego/a-judge-extends-the-deadline-for-a-class-action-lawsuit-for-veterans-who-suffered-ptsd>

THE SUCCESSOR TO JOE KELLER IN *ALL MY SONS*

FAKE CHIPS THREATEN MILITARY

Steve Johnson - 09/05/2010

A growing deluge of millions of counterfeit chips is posing peril to the military and the general public -- and perhaps nothing illustrates it better than a scheme federal prosecutors recently revealed that stretched from Southern California to Silicon Valley. Mustafa Aljaff and Neil Felahy, a Newport Beach pair indicted in October, have admitted importing from China more than 13,000 bogus chips altered to resemble those from legitimate companies, including local firms Intel, Atmel, Altera and National Semiconductor. Among those buying the chips was the U.S. Navy. <More at: www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_15990184>

IS THIS WHY THE GOV'T CAN'T PROCESS CLAIMS? ARE THERE PERVERTS AT THE DVA? PENTAGON TO INVESTIGATE HUNDREDS OF SUSPECTED CHILD PORNOGRAPHY FANS

John Cook - Sep 15,2010

In a reversal, the Pentagon says it will reopen hundreds of cases of alleged purchases of child pornography by Department of Defense employees that Pentagon officials previously declined to investigate, ... in 2007, investigators for the Defense Criminal Investigative Service obtained a list of 264 military service members, civilian employees and contractors for the Department of Defense who had used credit cards or PayPal to purchase access to a child pornography website. But the DCIS, citing scarce resources, pursued only 52 of the names before closing the project -- known as Project Flicker -- in 2008. Since no further public information on the cases was made available, it appears that the other people on the list of suspected child-pornography patrons were able to continue their careers without any interruption that stemmed from the investigation.

<More at: http://news.yahoo.com/s/yblog_upshot/20100915/ts_yblog_upshot/pentagon-to-investigate-hundreds-of-suspected-child-pornography-fans-in-its-ranks>

TO THE COLORS - GATHERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
9/22		Dothan AL	Resource Fair	Earl C. Jones, Jr.	334-596-1413
9/25		Orlando FL	Resource Fair	Ken Mueller	334-596-1413
9/25		Hamilton MT	Resource Fair	Allen Sperry/Bill Beckman	406-961-0035
9/25-27		Compton CA	Stand Down	Councilperson Barbara Calhoun	310-605-5534
9/27		Coeur d' Alene ID	Resource Fair	Robert E. Shoeman	208-769-1558 x-3993
9/29		Bemidji MN	Resource Fair	Paul Pedersen	218-722-8763

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9/30		International Falls MN	Resource Fair	Paul Pedersen	218-722-8763
9/30		Seattle Airport Marriott 3201 South 176 St., Seattle WA	Northwest Regional Career Expo		Register
9/30-10/3		Pink Hill Park Blue Springs MO	The Wall That Heals	City of Blue Springs	
10/1-3		Eureka CA	Stand Down	Deborah Reeves	707-444-8271
10/2		Colonie NY	Resource Fair	James A. Haggerty	518-784-3208
10/7		Bakersfield CA	Resource Fair	Charles Bikakis	661-868-7303
10/7- 10/10		American Legion Post 40 Vinita OK	The Wall That Heals	American Legion Post 40	
10/8-9		Grass Valley CA	Resource Fair	Chaplain Dennis Fruzza	530-273-3000
10/12-14		Dixon CA	Stand Down	Patrick Stasio	707-344-3743
10/13-14		Detroit MI	Resource Fair	Normal Wilcox	248-808-0969
10/14		Scottish Rite Event Center 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego	Western Regional Career Expo		Register
10/15-16		Knoxville TN	Resource Fair	Clyde Vincent	865-546-4813
10/19		Columbus OH	Resource Fair	Robert O'Keefe	614-559-6058

We are a non-partisan organization. We will advertise all legitimate veterans' events, regardless of purpose or affiliation.

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

DISABLED VET WINS WAR OVER VA BLUNDER

Lindsay Wise - Houston Chronicle - Aug. 25, 2010

John Paul Scott wasn't sure he'd heard correctly. "It's in the computer system that you're deceased," repeated an official from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"What are you talking about?" Scott asked. The 39-year-old Army veteran from Houston had been calling the VA's hotline twice a day for weeks to check the status of his disability claim. This time, on July 12, the VA official who answered the phone informed Scott he would no longer be receiving benefits because, according to VA records, he had passed away in April.

Scott suffers from vision problems traced to his service in the first Gulf War. In 2008, the VA had cut his monthly disability check by \$2,000. Scott appealed. On June 25, he had finally won. Now a bureaucratic blunder meant that Scott faced a Kafkaesque dilemma: As far as the VA was concerned, he was dead. His disability payments instantly halted. His medical prescriptions stopped. Scott, already in dire financial straits after the reduction in his benefits two years ago, feared he would end up on the street. ... Scott said his benefits were restored only after a Texas Veterans Commission advocate told VA officials in Houston that Scott had scheduled an interview with the Chronicle. Within days, the VA deposited more than \$40,000 in retroactive payments in Scott's account, including his regularly scheduled payment for the month of August, newly increased from \$981.50 to \$3,039. <More at: www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/military/7171765.html>

FT. BRAGG INVESTIGATES INFANT DEATHS

David Zucchino - Los Angeles Times - August 31, 2010

Ten babies have died suddenly since January 2007 while living in base housing. All were younger than 8 months, and no sign of foul play was found in any of the deaths.

On April 15, 2009, Melissa Pollard's two-month-old son, Jay Vair, stopped breathing and died inside military housing on this sprawling Army base. Three months later, on July 23, seven-month-old Ka'Mya Frey died suddenly while taking a nap in the same house. The baby was the daughter of Pollard's brother and his fiancée, Bianca Outlaw, who were living temporarily with Pollard and her soldier husband. Only later did Pollard and Outlaw learn from neighbors that another infant who had lived in the same house in 2007 died that year of an undetermined cause while with a babysitter in nearby Fayetteville, N.C.

<More at: www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-bragg-child-deaths-20100901.0.164398.story>

STUDY: TROOPS HAVE HIGHER RATES OF SOME CANCERS

Kelly Kennedy - Staff writer - Jul 20, 2010

After looking at 10 years' worth of cancer data, researchers at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center found that service members tend to have higher rates of melanoma, brain, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, breast, prostate and testicular cancers than civilians. They also found interesting differences across the services. Airmen are more likely to suffer skin cancer than other service members, for example, while sailors are the most likely to have lung cancer. Coast Guardsmen have the highest rates of testicular cancer, while Marines tend to have the lowest cancer rates overall.

<More at: www.armytimes.com/news/2010/07/military_cancer_rates_statistics_072010w>

DRUGGED TO DEATH: ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSES FROM RX COCKTAILS ALARM MILITARY OFFICIALS

Andrew Tilghman and Brendan McGarry - Staff writers - Sep 3, 2010

At least 32 soldiers and Marines assigned to their services' most-supervised medical units for wounded troops have died of accidental prescription drug overdoses since 2007. The 30 soldiers and two Marines overdosed while under the care of special Army Warrior Transition Units or the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, created three years ago to tightly focus care and attention on troops suffering from severe physical and psychiatric problems as a result of combat. Most of the troops had been prescribed "drug cocktails," combinations of drugs including pain killers, sleeping pills, antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs, interviews and records show. In all cases, suicide was ruled out.

<More at: www.navytimes.com/news/2010/09/military-accidental-overdoses-drug-cocktails-053110/>

DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CERTAIN HERBICIDE AGENTS (HAIRY CELL LEUKEMIA AND OTHER CHRONIC B-CELL LEUKEMIAS, PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE) A Rule by the Veterans Affairs Department on 08/31/2010

Official PDF XML: Tuesday, August 31, 2010 <http://federalregister.gov/a/2010-21556>

This document amends the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adjudication regulations concerning presumptive service connection for certain diseases based upon the most recent National Academy of

CANCER CLUSTER NEAR FT. DETRICK IN MARYLAND

August 09, 2010

Fort Detrick in Maryland is responsible for numerous cases of cancer, including three in one family, according to local residents. Base officials have admitted Agent Orange was used there a long time ago, along with industrial solvents, but the cleanup effort has not been completed. Fort Detrick is the site of an infectious disease laboratory that includes collections of Ebola virus, anthrax bacteria and botulinum toxin, among other substances.

<More at: http://www.allgov.com/Controversies/ViewNews/Cancer_Cluster_Near_Ft_Detrick_in_Maryland_100809>

MARINES WITH CANCER DECRY CORPS' SILENCE ABOUT TAINTED WATER

By Kim Geiger, Tribune Washington Bureau - September 16, 2010

When Peter Devereaux arrived at Camp Lejeune in December 1980, he had no idea that officials were looking into unsafe levels of toxic chemicals in the drinking water. As a Marine stationed at the sprawling military base along the North Carolina shore, Devereaux said, he led a healthy lifestyle. When he was diagnosed in early 2008 with a rare disease — male breast cancer — Devereaux did not connect his illness to Camp Lejeune.

But six months after he'd had his left breast and 22 cancerous lymph nodes removed, he received a letter from the Department of the Navy informing him that in the 1980s, "unregulated chemicals were discovered" in the drinking water at the camp's Hadnot Point water distribution system. <More at: <http://latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-cancer-marines-20100917.0.3042372.story>>

DOD SOUGHT DELAY IN LEJEUNE WATER STUDY

The Daily News - Jacksonville, N.C. - September 18, 2010

Defense Department e-mails obtained by The Daily News seem to corroborate a U.S. Congressman's claims Thursday that military leaders cared more about bad press than Camp Lejeune Marines poisoned by contaminated water.

Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C., speaking during a hearing on Camp Lejeune water contamination, said Marines and their families were exposed to toxic chemicals in the drinking water aboard the base for more than 30 years. He said military officials have not owned up to their responsibilities. <More at: www.military.com/news/article/dod-sought-delay-in-lejeune-water-study.html>

VA SAYS NO LINK YET BETWEEN WATER, ILLNESSES AT MARINE BASE

Barbara Barrett - McClatchy Newspapers - Sep. 16, 2010

In the decades that poisonous chemicals tainted the drinking water at Camp Lejeune, N.C., hundreds of thousands of Marines filed through the base, but so far, only 200 veterans have asked the Department of Veterans Affairs to link their illnesses to the poisons. Of those, only 20 have been told "yes."

A Veterans Affairs official told Congress on Thursday that despite the evidence of widespread contamination of drinking water at Camp Lejeune, the agency doesn't think that the science yet exists to link exposure to the toxic water led to a host of cancers and other diseases suffered by former base residents.

<More at: www.thestate.com/2010/09/16/1468934/va-says-no-link-yet-between-water.html>

EL TORO: THE PERFECT ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

Bob O'Dowd - Salem-News.com - Aug-23-2010

(IRVINE, Calif.) - The death knell for Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, California, once the premier Marine Corps air station, was sounded in 1985 when trichloroethylene (TCE) was found in three wells during a routine well inspection by the Orange County Water District (OCWD). Two wells were off the base, the other on the base.

The Navy spent hundreds of millions in remediation of soil and groundwater contamination. Even so, the \$650 million from the sale of base had to put them in the black. No efforts were made to contact veterans of the base who may have been exposed to toxic chemicals. <More at: <http://salem-news.com/articles/august232010/el-toro-crime-ro.php>>

DIABETES NOW TOPS VIETNAM VETS' CLAIMS

Mike Baker (AP) – 31 August 2010

RALEIGH, N.C. — By his own reckoning, a Navy electrician spent just eight hours in Vietnam, during a layover on his flight back to the U.S. in 1966. He bought some cigarettes and snapped a few photos. The jaunt didn't make for much of a war story, and there is no record it ever happened. But the man successfully argued that he may have been exposed to Agent Orange during his stopover and that it might have caused his diabetes — even though decades of research into the defoliant have failed to find more than a possibility that it causes the disease.

Because of worries about Agent Orange, about 270,000 Vietnam veterans — more than one-quarter of the 1 million receiving disability checks — are getting compensation for diabetes, according to Department of Veterans Affairs records obtained by The Associated Press through the Freedom of Information Act. More Vietnam veterans are being compensated for diabetes than for any other malady, including post-traumatic stress disorder, hearing loss or general wounds.

<More at: www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i51binYNGhTWqS0oMMp8itl20ZjqD9HU1UG00>

QUESTIONS LOOM OVER DRUG GIVEN TO SLEEPLESS VETS

Matthew Perrone (AP) –30 August 2010

WASHINGTON — Andrew White returned from a nine-month tour in Iraq beset with signs of post-traumatic stress disorder: insomnia, nightmares, constant restlessness. Doctors tried to ease his symptoms using three psychiatric drugs, including a potent anti-psychotic called Seroquel. ... In White's case, the nightmares persisted. So doctors recommended progressively larger doses of Seroquel. At one point, the 23-year-old Marine corporal was prescribed more than 1,600 milligrams per day — more than double the maximum dose recommended for schizophrenia patients. A short time later, White died in his sleep. <More at: www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iPPHBQ6w28w4kTXzANGm6kCzPN1qD9HTRUQ80>

INVISIBLE WOUNDS: MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MILITARY

Mark Thompson – Time Magazine - Aug. 22, 2010

U.S. Army specialist Ethan McCord was one of the first on the scene when a group of suspected insurgents was blown up on a Baghdad street in 2007, hit by 30-mm bursts from an Apache helicopter. "The top of one guy's head was completely off," he recalls. "Another guy was ripped open from groin to neck. A third had lost a leg ... Their insides were out and exposed. I'd

never seen anything like this before." Then McCord heard a child crying from a black minivan caught in the barrage. Inside, he found a frightened and wounded girl, perhaps 4. Next to her was a boy of 7 or so, soaked in blood. Their father, McCord says, "was slumped over on his side, like he was trying to protect the children, but he was just destroyed." McCord couldn't look away from the kids. "I started seeing images of my own two children back home in Kansas." Ethan McCord's mind and thousands like his are the U.S. Army's third front. While its combat troops fight two wars, its mental-health professionals are waging a battle to save soldiers' sanity when they come back, one that will cost billions long after combat ends in Baghdad and Kabul. It is a high-intensity conflict: Army troops, TIME has learned, are seeking mental help more than 100,000 times a month. That figure reflects a growth of more than 75% from the final months of 2006 to the final months of '09, according to Army data. <More at: www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2008886,00.html>

THOUSANDS STRAIN FORT HOOD'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Gregg Zoroya - USA TODAY - 8/23/2010

FORT HOOD, Texas — Nine months after an Army psychiatrist was charged with fatally shooting 13 soldiers and wounding 30, the nation's largest Army post can measure the toll of war in the more than 10,000 mental health evaluations, referrals or therapy sessions held every month. About every fourth soldier here, where 48,000 troops and their families are based, has been in counseling during the past year, according to the service's medical statistics. And the number of soldiers seeking help for combat stress, substance abuse, broken marriages or other emotional problems keeps increasing.

<More at: www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-08-23-1Aforthood23_CV_N.htm>

THE WAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELDS

New York Times - July 22, 2010

Suicide stalks the United States military as much as enemies do on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, according to the latest grim data. Last year, 347 military personnel were killed in the two wars, while at least 381 warriors took their own lives.

<More at: www.nytimes.com/2010/07/23/opinion/23fri3.html>

THE LUNATIC'S MANUAL

Bob Herbert - New York Times - August 2, 2010

The Army, to its credit, tells the story of a middle-aged lieutenant colonel who had served multiple combat tours and was suffering the agonizing effects of traumatic brain injury and dementia. He also had difficulty sleeping. Several medications were prescribed. On a visit to an emergency room, he was given a 30-tablet refill of Ambien. He went to his car and killed himself by ingesting the entire prescription with a quantity of rum. He left a suicide note that said his headaches and other pain were unbearable. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2010/08/03/opinion/03herbert.html>

NEW MENTAL HEALTH EFFORT FOCUSES ON MILITARY FAMILIES

Lorene Parshall - Staff Writer Gaylord MI Herald Times - July 23, 2010

GRAYLING — A recent study concluded that children and youth in military families can be at a significant disadvantage compared to nonmilitary peers unless they receive appropriate mental health or other types of support when needed. Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) has released a report on the negative impact of military life on the children of soldiers. Frequent moves, parent deployments, physical and psychological injuries incurred by parents in war zones, or their deaths, can leave a lifelong mark on children if not treated.

<More at: www.gaylordheraldtimes.com/articles/2010/07/23/news/top_stories/doc4c49d327c0f6a353332020.txt>

COMMITTEE EVALUATES VA'S GULF WAR ILLNESS TASK FORCE

July 27, 2010

On Tuesday, July 27, 2010, Subcommittee Chairman Harry Mitchell (D-AZ) conducted the third hearing in a series of Oversight and Investigations hearings focused on Gulf War Illness (GWI). The final in the series was intended to gauge the outlook going forward for veterans suffering from GWI, specifically examining how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers healthcare and benefits to this group of veterans. <More at: www.vawatchdog.org/10/hcva10/hcva072710-1.htm>

HALF WAY THERE! ONLY 20 YEARS TO GO TO CATCH UP WITH AGENT ORANGE **VA SECRETARY HOPES TO IMPROVE ACCESS, OUTREACH TO VETERANS**

Leo Shane III - Stars and Stripes - August 1, 2010

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki concedes that a full transformation to a user-friendly, fast-moving department is still years away, but he also insists that the focus and approach of VA workers has fundamentally changed in the last 18 months.

"Our primary focus has been access. We've wanted to outreach to all veterans who need us," Shinseki said in an interview with Stars and Stripes. "We know if we diagnose and treat [problems], people get better. If we don't, there's a good percentage of them who get worse." >More at: www.stripes.com/va-secretary-hopes-to-improve-access-outreach-to-veterans-1.113078<

VA APPROVES \$2.8M FOR GULF WAR ILLNESS RESEARCH

July 21, 2010

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has approved \$2.8 million to fund three new research projects that focus on testing or developing new treatments for illnesses affecting Veterans who served in the Gulf War 1990-1991. ... About 697,000 men and women served in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 1990 to June 1991 during the Gulf War. In the years since they returned, nearly a quarter of these Veterans have experienced chronic symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, gastrointestinal problems, cognitive dysfunction, sleep disturbances, persistent headaches, skin rashes, respiratory conditions and mood changes. The symptoms are known collectively as "Gulf War Veterans' illnesses."

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/10/vap10/vap072110-1.htm>

NOW THEY'LL BE ABLE TO IGNORE YOU BY JUST PUSHING A BUTTON

VA LAUNCHES DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ONLINE CLAIMS SYSTEM

July 2, 2010

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today plans to develop a fully automated, online system for handling Veterans' disability compensation claims. More than a simple digitization of existing paper-based claims, the new system is part of VA's modernization of the end-to-end processing workflow. Automation will substantially reduce processing time and increase accuracy while simplifying the way that Veterans interact with the claims process. <More at: www.vawatchdog.org/10/vap10/vap070210-1.htm>

COURT PROGRAM OFFERS A MORE REHABILITATIVE WAY OF HANDLING VETS

Jack Leonard - Los Angeles Times - September 14, 2010

L.A. County joins surge of courts offering veterans convicted of drug offenses or nonviolent crimes counseling and treatment instead of jail. But it's not a free pass, the judge warns. <More at: <http://latimes.com/news/local/la-me-veterans-20100914.0.5360028.story>>

SPECIAL COURTS DIVERT WASH. VETERANS FROM JAIL

Kevin Graman - THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW - September 19, 2010

SPOKANE, Wash. -- After surviving 15 months in one of the most dangerous places on Earth, Iraq war veteran Carl Jacobson thought he could cope with just about anything civilian life had to throw at him. ... Jacobson was arrested in July on a domestic violence charge after breaking the door of the north Spokane apartment he shares with his girlfriend and her two young children. The former Army sergeant could have been convicted of third-degree malicious mischief last week, but instead he received a "stipulated order of continuance" from Spokane County District Judge Vance Peterson on the first day of Veterans Court. If Jacobson completes a two-year counseling program under the terms of his continuance, the charge will be dismissed. <More at: www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap_wa_veterans_court.html>

VETERAN'S CRIME CASE MOVED TO VET'S COURT

Sept. 14, 2010

BUFFALO, N.Y., Sept. 14 (UPI) -- A New York veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, charged with making death and bomb threats, may end up avoiding prison, his lawyer said. The case of Britten M. Walker, 33, of Eden is the first federal criminal case in the United States to be transferred to a veterans' court, The Buffalo News reported Tuesday.

<More at: www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2010/09/14/Veterans-crime-case-moved-to-vets-court/UPI-47551284504373/>

VETS RETURNING HOME TO UNFRIENDLY JOB MARKET

Emmeline Zhao

Veterans returning from overseas are encountering a particularly hostile job market these days. While the 8.4% unemployment rate for veterans overall is lower than the 9.5% rate for the population as a whole, the jobless rate for veterans who served since September 2001 rose to 11.8% in July, the Labor Department said Friday. That's up from 11.5% the month before. <More at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703988304575413403465511916.html>>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2010

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2,742 DAYS)

KILLED US	4,421
WOUNDED US [8/31/10]	31,934
OTHER US CASUALTIES [8/31/10]	40,436
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [8/31/10]	216
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1
KILLED UK	179
KILLED OTHER COALITION	139
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	1,819
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [11/9/08]	1,182
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY [1/25/09] ≥	48,874
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS [9/20/10] ≥	106,954 – 1,366,350
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS [9/20/10] ≥	400K–1.556M
IRAQ REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	2.1M/2.5M

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (3,271 DAYS)

KILLED US	1287
WOUNDED US [8/31/10]	7,951
OTHER CASUALTIES US [8/31/10]	11,063
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [8/31/10]	44
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1
KILLED COALITION	801
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION [12/2/07]	1,602
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY [7/4/09] ≥	11,152
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS [9/10/2010] ≥	8,813
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS [2/24/2009]	46,322
AFGHAN REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	1.75M/4.8M
COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE	\$748,038,782,789
COST OF AFGHAN WAR TO DATE	\$334,779,862,124

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

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACTIVATED AS OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2010

This week the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps announced a decrease in activated reservists, while the Air Force and Coast Guard announced an increase. The net collective result is 816 fewer reservists activated than last week. At any given time, services may activate some units and individuals while deactivating others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 73,840; Navy Reserve, 6,927; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 15,600; Marine Corps Reserve, 4,051; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 791. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 101,209, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated is on line at www.defense.gov/news/d20100914nqr.pdf.

DWIGHT RADCLIFF DIES AT 55; LED PROGRAM TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS

Carla Rivera - Los Angeles Times - August 02, 2010

Dwight Radcliff, an Air Force veteran who overcame homelessness to lead a national organization providing services for former soldiers facing similar obstacles, has died. He was 55.

Radcliff died Saturday of a heart attack at Marina del Rey Hospital, near his home, said Nicole Ward, a family spokeswoman and longtime friend and associate. As president and chief executive of United States Veterans Initiative, Radcliff led a nonprofit organization that provides job training and placement, counseling and housing to more than 2,000 veterans and their families daily in five states and the District of Columbia. Last month, the group broke ground on a new \$34.9-million affordable housing development near Los Angeles International Airport for low-income veterans. <More at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/02/local/la-me-dwight-radcliff-20100802>>

AFTERTHOUGHTS ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

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SOLDIERS PUNISHED FOR REFUSING TO ATTEND A CHRISTIAN ROCK CONCERT

The Associated Press - August 21st, 2010

The Army said Friday it was investigating a claim that dozens of soldiers who refused to attend a Christian band's concert at a Virginia military base were banished to their barracks and told to clean them up.

Fort Eustis spokesman Rick Haverinen told The Associated Press he couldn't comment on the specifics of the investigation. <More at: www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/08/troops-refusing-attend-christian-concert-trouble/>

OH YEAH ~ THAT BELT BUCKLE PROVES WHAT A PATRIOT HE IS!

BODY ARMOUR BOSS LOOTED \$185M TO PAY FOR PROSTITUTES AND PARTIES, COURT HEARS

Tom Leonard - New York - 27 Jul 2010

Prosecutors say David H Brooks used his company, DHB Industries, as his own private bank account, paying for his stable of race horses, pornography videos for his son, a \$100,000 gem-encrusted US flag belt buckle, plastic surgery for his wife and prostitutes for his staff. <More at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/7912997/Body-armor-boss-looted-185m-to-pay-for-prostitutes-and-parties-court-hears.html>

REMORSEFUL US VET RETURNS FRENCH WAR FLAG TO PARIS

Angela Doland - Associated Press Writer - Sep. 19, 2010

On the day Paris was liberated from the Nazis in 1944, a young American soldier nabbed a souvenir of epic proportions: He took home the French flag that hung from the Arc de Triomphe, a symbol of the end of four years of struggle and shame. Six and a half decades later, the aging veteran has given the flag back to the city of Paris. Officials from Paris City Hall took possession of the 12-meter (13-yard) tricolor flag Saturday in a ceremony in southern France, a step in its unusual journey from New York state back home to Paris. The American veteran remains anonymous, too ashamed to come forward.

<More at: www.thestate.com/2010/09/19/v-print/1473014/emblematic-french-wwii-flag-returned.html>

CLICK THROUGH ON THIS ONE – IT'S HILARIOUS AND TRUE

COLONEL KICKED OUT OF WAR FOR HATING POWERPOINT

Alex Pareene- - Aug 27, 2010

An Army reserve colonel on his second Afghanistan tour has been kicked out of that country for writing an editorial about how much he hates PowerPoint. Col. Lawrence Sellin was on the staff of the International Security Assistance Force's Joint Command, the organization that, according to Spencer Ackerman, "formed last year to oversee the war's day-to-day operations." PowerPoint enthusiast and Afghanistan war commander David Petraeus loves the IJC. Sellin thinks it's a pointless bureaucratic nightmare that accomplishes nothing.

<More at: www.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/2010/08/27/afghanistan_powerpoint_hater_fired/>

ADD-ON ~ STUFF OF INTEREST

NEW TRICARE COVERAGE FOR RETIRED RESERVE

September 13, 2010

For the first time, members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called "gray area" retirees, can purchase TRICARE health coverage for themselves and their eligible family members with the recent launch of the TRICARE Retired Reserve. Retired reservists may qualify to purchase TRR coverage if they are under the age of 60 and are not eligible for, or enrolled in, the Federal Employees Health Benefits program. They also must be members of the Retired Reserve of a Reserve component and qualified for non-regular retirement. For instructions on how to qualify for and purchase TRR, visit the [TRICARE Retired Reserve webpage](http://www.military.com/military-report/new-tricare-coverage-for-retired-reserve).

www.military.com/military-report/new-tricare-coverage-for-retired-reserve

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 <mailto:scook@vuft.org>

If you need to call us, our number is 1.805.530.6417.

The phone is covered by a voice recorder 24 hours a day. We'll get back to you ASAP.