

Sound Off!



Vol. II, No 3 The Newsletter of VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, Inc.

"Veterans standing up for each other"

25 September 2006

First Call - THEME OF THE ISSUE AND/OR CLIPS & QUOTES

Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions

1. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of the armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all cases be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth of wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

- (a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;
- (b) taking of hostages;
- (c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
- (d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

2. The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for.

There is confusion??

"What does that mean, 'outrages upon human dignity?' That's a statement that is wide open to interpretation. What I'm proposing is that there be clarity in the law so our professionals will have no doubt about what they are doing is legal."

President George W. Bush
15 September 2006
White House News Conference

When specifics limit results

9-1 -1

"911 Operator – what is the nature of your emergency?"

"My house is on fire – send help!"

"I am sorry sir, that description is too vague. What precisely is on fire, all of it or just certain parts?" -- *"It soon will be all of it!"*

"Sir, please cooperate. List those specific parts of your house that are on fire. Let's start with the roof. Is all of your roof on fire or only certain parts?" -- *"My house is burning up!"*

"Well sir, if it isn't the roof, then are the windows on fire? Please start with the first window to the right-hand side of your front door and proceed around the house and let me know which one's are on fire and which one's are not." -- *"My house is in flames!"*

"Sir, if you can't be more specific then you cannot expect me or the fire department to understand what your problem is. Our professional emergency personnel must have no doubt that what they are doing is legal."

"Never mind."

Some who have understood

"The world is beginning to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism. To redefine Common Article 3 would add to those doubts. Furthermore, it would put our own troops at risk."

General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret)
13 September 2006

"25. The United States abides by the laws of war. Its Armed Forces, in their dealing with all other peoples, are expected to comply with the laws of war, in the spirit and the letter. In waging war, we do not terrorize helpless non-combatants, if it is within our power to avoid so doing. Wanton killing, torture, cruelty or the working of unusual hardship on enemy prisoners or populations is not justified in any circumstance. Likewise, respect for the reign of law, *as that term is understood in the United States*, is expected to follow the flag wherever it goes ..."

Brig. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall, USA (Ret)
with General of the Army George C. Marshall, USA (Ret)
1950, in the original *The Armed Forces Officer
Americans in Combat: The Fundamental Propositions*

Here is an easy way to know

Just insert a couple of words. Make it read"

"outrages on [the] personal dignity [of your family], in particular humiliating and degrading treatment [of your mother, wife, daughter, father, son, brother, friend]."

It kind of makes the meaning more clear, doesn't it? [Ed.]

Reveille - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

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. CHECK OUT THE "CANDIDATES" PAGE, WHICH IS OUR EFFORT TO LIST ALL VETERANS RUNNING FOR STATE-WIDE AND FEDERAL OFFICE IN THE U.S.; IT IS BEING UPDATED DAILY. PLEASE HELP US MAKE THIS AS COMPLETE A LIST AS POSSIBLE BY SENDING CANDIDATE INFO TO SCOOK@VUFT.ORG.

Assembly - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

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

Mail call - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

From a member

I read your editorial and while the facts speak for themselves, I believe the motives may not be revealed by the votes. I think we will all agree it is easy to take the principled high ground when there is no cost. It is easy to vote "yes" for something you know has no chance of passing. Since the Democrats do not have control of the legislative or executive branch, they can cast easy votes without regard to paying the bill. Republicans on the other hand need to cast their votes with an eye to the notion it may become law, and become a cost item. Of course that hasn't stopped the GOP from becoming the free spenders they once loathed. [Name withheld only because I forgot to get permission Ed.]

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

Buying-Out Disabled Veterans

by Larry Scott September 17, 2006

...Last week, the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) met in Washington, D.C. and, once again, took up the issue of [lump-sum buyouts](#). The VDBC was created by the Bush administration in 2003 and tasked with determining "...whether the death or disability of a veteran should be compensated..." and at what level, if any.

...There is a great deal of support on Capitol Hill for the lump-sum buyouts. Leading the charge is Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, who sees the buyouts as a [logical cost-cutting move](#).

...But, there is opposition. Not one veterans' service organization is in favor of the move. The American Legion, arguably the most conservative veterans' organization, has reminded its members that "...Chairman Buyer and other government officials have publicly expressed their desire to use the VDBC as a vehicle to institute radical changes in the VA disability system that would negatively impact and restrict entitlement to benefits for a large number of veterans."

...Initially the VDBC will look at lump-sum payments to veterans who receive 10 per cent or 20 per cent disability payments, those veterans currently receiving \$112 or \$218 a month. The buyouts would be based on life expectancy with only a percentage of the total value offered. Most commonly mentioned is a 50 per cent buyout, but some have mentioned 30 per cent as a more prudent offer. (Example: If a veteran gets \$218 a month from the VA and has a life expectancy of 20 years, his total compensation would be \$52,320. The proposed buyouts would offer a cash settlement of somewhere between \$15,696 and \$26,160.) <More at: www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_larry_sc_060917_buying_out_disabled_.htm>

with the cpi projected to rise 4.6% for 2006, both active duty and disabled veterans get shortchanged!

Congress OKs Military Pay Boost

Associated Press | September 23, 2006

WASHINGTON - House-Senate negotiators Thursday approved a new \$70 billion infusion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as they wrapped up talks on a \$447 billion Pentagon funding bill. The bill provides for a 2.2 percent pay increase for the military as President Bush requested in his February budget. The additional war funds would bring the total approved by Congress for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001, to more than \$500 billion, with another installment likely to come next spring. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,114624,00.html>

Senate passes VA COLA -- 2.9% Raise for Disabled Veterans Compensation

Rick Mize - Marine Corps Times - Sep 23, 2006

The Senate passed a veterans' cost-of-living bill Thursday night, hoping the annual adjustment isn't held up because lawmakers plan on taking a break for the November elections. The amount of the increase, which would take effect on Dec. 1, won't be determined for several weeks, but is expected to be about 2.9 percent. About 3 million people — disabled veterans, survivors and low-income veterans receiving pensions from the Department of Veterans Affairs — would be affected.

<More at: www.marinetimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-2124097.php>

Congress passes military protection bill

Jim Abrams - Associated Press Writer - Sept. 21, 2006

WASHINGTON — Servicemen and women would be shielded from people pushing inferior or overpriced financial service and insurance packages under legislation ready for President Bush's signature. The measure, which was given final congressional clearance in the House Thursday, would allow state insurance regulators to better enforce state and federal law on military bases.

It also would also ban discredited financial products that are no longer available on civilian markets but are still sold to people in the service, who tend to be younger and less schooled in financial matters. The House approved the bill on a 418-3 vote. The Senate passed it on a voice vote in July. The chief House sponsor, Rep. Geoff Davis, R-Ky., said that as a former combat arms officer he was among the service members losing thousands of dollars from deceptively advertised investments.

<More at: www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/politics/4204260.html>

Legislation offers veterans new and enhanced medical facilities

Press Release - September 13, 2006

H.R. 5815, the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Authorization Act of 2006 passes House

Washington, D.C. — Today, the House unanimously passed H.R. 5815, the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Authorization Act of 2006. This bill authorizes the construction of multiple major medical facility projects, including new hospitals in Las Vegas, Nevada and Orlando, Florida as well as the expansion of the Spinal Cord Injury Center in Tampa, Florida.

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/housecvanews/housecvanews09-13-06-2.htm>

call for a Real Budget based on Real Demands after GAO Report Reveals VA Failures

For Immediate Release:, September 20, 2006

GAO Report finds that past VA budget planning was based on "unrealistic assumptions, errors in estimation, and insufficient data."

(Washington D.C.) – U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) today called on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Jim Nicholson to provide Congress with an accurate plan for the health care of America's veterans, a plan based on real numbers and real demands for service. The call comes after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a stunning report detailing the VA's failure to provide accurate information for budget needs in fiscal years 2005 and 2006. The report found that the VA used faulty information when planning for overall health care demands and that it estimated health care costs for service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan based on prewar data.

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvademsnews/senatecvademsnews09-20-06.htm>

general says u.s. may boost forces in iraq

Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press Writer - Sep 19

The U.S. military is likely to maintain and may even increase its force of more than 140,000 troops in Iraq through next spring, the top American commander in the region said Tuesday in one of the gloomiest assessments yet of when troops may come home. Gen. John Abizaid, commander of the U.S. Central Command, said military leaders would consider adding troops or extending the Iraq deployments of other units if needed. Until sectarian violence spiked early this year, Bush administration officials had voiced hopes that this election year would see significant U.S. troop reductions.

<More at: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060919/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iraq>

Why We Can't Send More Troops

Lawrence J. Korb and Peter Ogden - The Washington Post - Sep 14, 2006

In "Reinforce Baghdad" [op-ed, Sept. 12], William Kristol and Rich Lowry argue that the United States needs to deploy "substantially" more troops to Iraq to stabilize the country. Aside from the strategic dubiousness of their proposal -- Kristol and Lowry's piece might alternatively have been titled "Reinforcing Failure" -- there is a practical obstacle to it that they overlook: Sending more troops to Iraq would, at the moment, threaten to break our nation's all-volunteer Army and undermine our national security. This is not a risk our country can afford to take.

In their search for additional troops and equipment for Iraq, the first place that Kristol and Lowry would have to look is the active Army. But even at existing deployment levels, the signs of strain on the active Army are evident. In July an official report revealed that two-thirds of the active U.S. Army was classified as "not ready for combat." When one combines this news with the fact that roughly one-third of the active Army is deployed (and thus presumably ready for combat), the math is simple but the answer alarming: The active Army has close to zero combat-ready brigades in reserve.

The second place to seek new troops and equipment is the Army National Guard and Reserve. But the news here is, if anything, worse. When asked by reporters to comment on the strain that the active Army was under, the head of the National Guard said that his military branch was "in an even more dire situation than the active Army. We both have the same symptoms; I just have a higher fever." <More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/13/AR2006091301575.html>

Strained, U.S. army looks to guard for more relief

Thom Shanker and Michael R. Gordon - The New York Times - September 22, 2006

WASHINGTON Strains on the Army from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have become so severe that Army officials say they may be forced to make greater use of the National Guard to provide enough U.S. troops for overseas deployments.

Senior Army officers have discussed that analysis - and described the possible need to use more members of the National Guard - with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's senior adviser on personnel, David Chu, according to Pentagon officials. While no decision has been made to mobilize more Guard forces, and may not need to be before midterm elections, the prospect presents the Bush administration with a politically vexing problem: how, without expanding the Army, to balance the pressing need for troops in the field against promises to limit overseas deployments for the Guard. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2006/09/22/world/22army.html>

Answering the call — again and again

Jim Miklaszewski - Chief Pentagon correspondent - NBC News - Sept 22, 2006

Frequent deployments stretch Army, National Guard to near breaking point

WASHINGTON - A senior military official tells NBC News that five years of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan have stretched the Army to a dangerous breaking point.

For the Army, the pace of combat has been relentless. Many soldiers are already on their third combat tour. Frequent deployments have cut training time at home in half, which has left two-thirds of all Army combat units rated "not ready for combat."

"I think, arguably, it's the worst readiness condition the U.S. Army has faced since the end of Vietnam," says NBC military analyst and retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey.

So the Army's looking again to the National Guard for relief. <More at: www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14958938/>

New York City's Reservists Are Asked to Return Iraq Pay

Andy Newman - September 23, 2006

When they were called up for military service in the wake of 9/11, hundreds of uniformed city workers in the Reserves faced the suspension of their city health and pension benefits. The city offered them an option: it would keep paying their salaries and continue their benefits, but when they returned they would have to repay the city their city salary or their military pay, whichever was less.

On its face, the offer made sense. And many reservists had only a few days to get their affairs together before shipping out — hardly enough time to consult accountants. Nearly all took the deal. As the war dragged on, more than 1,600 city employees, mostly police officers, signed up for the benefits program. Now the bills from the city are coming due, for far more than many veterans imagined they would have to pay — as much as \$200,000 — and often for more money than they ever received.

The city is demanding that the veterans repay their gross salaries, even though they never saw about a third of the money, which went for taxes and other deductions. The commissioner of administrative services, Martha K. Hirst, said veterans should be able to get back the difference between gross and take-home pay by amending their tax returns. But several tax accountants said the city had created an accounting quagmire. David Gitel, a tax accountant in Manhattan, said that if the employees paid the money back over several years — which many will have to do — rather than in a lump sum, they could lose thousands of dollars in income-tax and social security payments. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2006/09/23/nyregion/nyregionspecial3/23pay.html>

U.S. to maintain Afghanistan force level

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan are likely to remain steady, at about 21,000, at least until next February, the top U.S. general there said Thursday, echoing earlier comments about forces in Iraq. Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry told Pentagon reporters that while the Taliban enemy in Afghanistan is not extremely strong, their numbers and influence have grown in some southern sections of the country.

<More at: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060921/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_afghanistan>

Total Economic Cost of Iraq War up to \$2 Trillion

Linda Bilmes - Nieman Foundation at Harvard Univeristy - Sep 23, 2006

The true cost of this war goes well beyond the massive current budget appropriations; it includes lifetime benefits for the wounded, replacement costs for the military, the loss to the families and the communities of the injured and the dead, increased debt, a drag on the economy, higher oil prices and much more.

In our study, The Economic Costs of the Iraq War, Columbia University Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz and I estimated that the war in Iraq will ultimately cost Americans as much as \$2 trillion dollars. That's including direct costs to the taxpayer and other costs to the economy. <More at: www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=ask_this.view&askthisid=00235>

To the Color - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Purpose
9/26		Savannah, GA	Resource Fair	Sally Eddins 478-272-1210 x2648	National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Event
9/28		Tacoma, WA	Resource Fair	Mark Mascho Jr. 253-798-7449	ditto
10/5		Port Angeles, WA	Resource Fair	John Braasch 360-683-6495	ditto
10/13-15		Redding, CA	Stand Down	Kevin Marshall 530-225-2194	ditto
10/13*14		Grass Valley, CA	Resource Fair	Sue Gill 530-273-1612	ditto
10/13*14		Oklahoma City, OK	Resource Fair	Larry Chatman 405-401-0755	ditto
10/13-15		Nashville, TN	Stand Down	Bill Burleigh 615-321-3919	ditto
10/14-16		Eureka, CA	Stand Down	Kim Hall 707-442-4322	ditto

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 veterans' events, regardless of purpose.

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

REP. MILLER URGES GOP LEADERS TO DROP OPPOSITION TO SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

Tom Kiley/Rachel Racusen - September 12, 2006

Provisions Would Give Military Families More Flexibility at Work

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the senior Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, issued the following statement today after the [Army Times reported](#) that Republican leaders on the committee planned to oppose a provision in a pending defense bill that would require the federal government to give its employees more flexibility to use earned leave time to care for their families while a loved one is called to active duty for the U.S. Armed Forces and would encourage private employers to do the same. <More at: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/>>

Tenfold Increase in OEF/OIF Reporting Stress, Mental Disorders

[Associated Press](#) - September 24, 2006

"More than one-third of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans seeking medical treatment from the Veterans Health Administration report symptoms of stress or other mental disorders -- a tenfold increase in the last 18 months, according to an agency study. The dramatic jump in cases -- coming as more troops face multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan -- has triggered concern among some veterans groups that the agency may not be able to meet the demand. They say veterans have had to deal with long waits for doctor appointments, staffing shortages and lack of equipment at medical centers run by the Veterans Affairs Department."

..."If the VA is going to see 30 percent of the 1.5 million U.S. service members who have deployed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the VA may expect a total of 450,000 veteran patients from these two wars," said Paul Sullivan, director of programs for the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. "This is a very ominous trend, indicating a tidal wave of new patients coming in, and the numbers could go up."

<http://ptsdcombat.blogspot.com/2006/09/tenfold-increase-in-oefoif-reporting.html>

Veterans get benefits they didn't know they had

Kyung M. Song - Seattle Times - Sep 23, 2006

Every month for most of the past decade, Benjamin "Frank" Jordan has forked over as much as \$2,000 of his Social Security and veterans benefits to help Medicaid offset the cost of his nursing-home care.

What Jordan didn't know was that he shouldn't have paid a cent.

Jordan, a Navy veteran with a service-connected disability, should have gotten his nursing-home care free from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Now Jordan, 71, who uses a wheelchair, has his room at a Mercer Island nursing home completely paid for from nearly \$40,000 a year in newfound veterans benefits, thanks to a state program that matches poor veterans with thousands of dollars in federal benefits they've missed.

<More at: http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2003271974_veterans23m.html>

VA 'Retro Pay' Begins

Tom Philpott | September 15, 2006

First of 133,000 Disabled Retirees Get 'VA Retro Pay'

A small group of disabled military retirees this month will be the first of 133,000 to receive lump-sum back payments, which are tied to start-up challenges for two "concurrent receipt" programs enacted since 2003, say officials with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).

The trickle of back payments in September will become a small geyser at the end of October. By then, officials say, another 40,000 retirees will see their catch-up payments deposited electronically in their bank accounts by either the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), DFAS or by both. Back payments will vary in size from several hundred dollars up to \$10,000 or more. The average payment, by one estimate, will be \$3700. <More at: www.military.com/features/0,15240,113587,00.html>

Iraq War's signature wound: traumatic brain injury

Jordan Robertson - Associated Press - Seattle Post-Intelligencer - Sep 17, 2006

PALO ALTO, California -- Lance Cpl. Sam Reyes bears scars from three horrific attacks in Iraq, but his most debilitating wound cannot be seen.

He recovered from the chest wound delivered by a machine gun-toting insurgent and the bullet wound to his back that came during an ambush. He survived the severe burns and broken ribs inflicted by a suicide bomber who struck a lightly armored 18-wheeler he was riding in - an explosion that killed 12 of his fellow Marines.

One injury initially went undetected. It continues to cripple him long after he arrived home with a clean bill of health. Reyes suffered a traumatic brain injury in the truck explosion. The blast sent a powerful shock wave through his brain tissue, bursting blood vessels and smacking his brain against the inside of his skull.

"I thought I was a mess-up, just damn near dumb," Reyes, 22, said about the mysterious foggyess that plagued him long after his physical wounds healed. "I thought I was just a failure at this. I was recognized before as being the best. I knew my stuff real well. It made me feel like I wasn't a Marine no more."

Doctors say traumatic brain injuries are the signature wound of the Iraq war, a byproduct of improved armor that allows troops to survive once-deadly attacks but does not fully protect against roadside explosives and suicide bombers. So far, about 1,000 patients have been treated for the symptoms, which include slowed thinking, severe memory loss and problems with coordination and impulse control. Some doctors fear there may be thousands more active duty and discharged troops who are suffering undiagnosed. <More at: http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1110AP_Iraq_War_Brain_Injuries.html>

Expect more cuts in family support programs, Army warns

Leo Shane III - Stars and Stripes - European edition - September 22, 2006

WASHINGTON - Army officials have told base commanders to prepare for even deeper cuts in family support programs and other non-war-related expenses next fiscal year.

In June, the Army announced cuts in base discretionary spending and other non-war expenses to offset unexpected costs associated with military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even after Congress approved supplemental military funding in response, service officials said they would continue to curb spending. Although the fiscal 2007 defense budget is still being debated in Congress, Army officials have warned base commanders that they'll likely face more belt tightening under next year's budget because of the ongoing combat operations. <More at: www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=40231>

Guardman Credits Employer for Looking After His Family

Gerry J. Gilmore - American Forces Press Service (AFPS)

WASHINGTON, Sept. 19, 2006 – National Guardsman Scott J. Moser said he and his fellow combat engineers routinely risked their lives while they searched for unexploded roadside bombs in Iraq. However, Moser didn't worry too much about how his family was faring back home, he said, thanks to AgCountry Farm Credit Service, his civilian employer in Fargo, N.D.

"The company helped me out," Moser, a 38-year-old father of three, said in a recent interview with AFPS.

AgCountry Farm Credit Service, a business that provides loans to farmers and ranchers, is one of 15 U.S. businesses chosen to receive the 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Moser nominated his company for the award. The award recognizes U.S. employers that rise above the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

... During Moser's deployment his company provided the difference between his military pay and his normal civilian pay. Moser said company officials also assisted his wife in resolving pay and medical issues while he was overseas.

"Financially, my family didn't have to be concerned about any change in cash flow or anything like that while I was gone," Moser said. <More at: www.defenselink.mil/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=1010>

Program Paves Road to Jobs for Wounded Vets

Elaine Wilson Special to American Forces Press Service - September 21, 2006

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas, Sept. 21, 2006 - Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Morales may have lost both his legs while on a training mission in support of the global war on terrorism, but he was standing tall Sept. 19 at the Hiring Heroes Career Fair here. Morales walked away from the job fair with several enticing offers of employment, including one from Northrop Grumman, a global defense company committed to hiring wounded warriors.

...Hiring Heroes is co-sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, DoD's Military Severely Injured Center and Monster.com, a networking hub for current and former military people, defense workers and their families.
<More at: www.defenselink.mil/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=1075>

Extension of homeless veterans' programs sought

Rick Maze - Staff writer

...At the end of the month, two grant programs aimed at homeless veterans — one that provides per diem to shelters and the second that provides technical assistance to providers — will expire. Rep. Michael H. Michaud, D-ME, is sponsoring a bill, the Homeless Veterans Assistance Act of 2006, that would reauthorize the programs. The bill, HR 5960, was introduced July 28, just before Congress left town for the long August recess. <More at: www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-2115038.php>

Conservative Congressman Blocking Crackdown on Predatory Lenders Targeting U.S. Troops

Predatory lenders are seriously harming the U.S. military, and one member of Congress is fighting to keep it that way.

A Pentagon report last month found that as many one in five U.S. service members “are being preyed on by loan centers set up near military bases” that can charge interest of 400 percent or more. Increasingly, soldiers have debt levels so high they are barred from serving overseas; others suffer from “bankruptcies, divorces and ruined careers.” The Pentagon has joined consumer, military, and veterans groups in backing a bipartisan amendment from Sens. Jim Talent (R-MO) and Bill Nelson (D-FL) that places a cap of 36 percent on high interest rates for short-term payday loans to military members.

But one conservative congressman, Rep. Geoff Davis (R-KY), is trying to gut the amendment. Davis has proposed his own language — praised by the payday lending industry — that sets no real limits on predatory lenders. One of Davis's aides admitted last week <http://www.kentucky.com/mld/kentucky/news/15533221.htm> that he consulted on the legislation with “CNG Financial of Mason, Ohio, one of his top campaign donors and owner of national payday lender Check ‘n Go.”
<http://thinkprogress.org/2006/09/page/2/>

Taps - Passings and War Statistics

War Price on US Lives Equal to 9/11

Calvin Woodward - The Associated Press - 23 September 2006

Washington - Now the death toll is 9/11 times two. US military deaths from Iraq and Afghanistan now surpass those of the most devastating terrorist attack in America's history, the trigger for what came next.

The latest milestone for a country at war came Friday without commemoration. It came without the precision of knowing who was the 2,974th to die in conflict. The terrorist attacks killed 2,973 victims in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

An Associated Press count of the U.S. death toll in Iraq rose to 2,696. Combined with 278 U.S. deaths in and around Afghanistan, the 9/11 toll was reached, then topped, the same day. <More at: www.truthout.org/docs_2006/092306Z.shtml>

National Guard and Reserve Mobilized as of September 20, 2006

This week, the Air Force announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Army, Navy and Marine Corps had a decrease. The Coast Guard number remained the same. The net collective result is 1,834 fewer 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. Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 87,291; Navy Reserve, 6,155; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,175; Marine Corps Reserve, 7,348; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 317. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 108,286, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2006/d20060920ngr.pdf>.

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2006

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	2,702
*WOUNDED US [EST. NO DoD UPDATE SINCE 8/18]≥20,322	
KILLED UK	118
KILLED OTHER COALITION	117
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	645
KILLED CONTRACTORS	352
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 35,434
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 48,215
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 200,000+

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	339
WOUNDED/INJURED US	957
KILLED COALITION	199
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	597
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	32,034

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

* Because the US does not report injuries and sicknesses, the total of "injured all causes" is estimated to be >40,000.

To see the demographic data on the casualties go to www.militarycity.com/2000casualties

afterthoughts

Why Retired Military Brass Don't Want Torture

Charles Kaiser - September 24, 2006

Firsthand combat experiences compel old guard to attack Bush's 'alternative interrogation.'

FOR ONE 83-year-old veteran of World War II, it was the searing memory of a Japanese prisoner who helped turn the tide on Iwo Jima. For a 40-year veteran of Army intelligence, it was a trip to the battlefield at Gettysburg. For all 43 retired generals and admirals, it was a combination of moral outrage and deep disgust over President Bush's proposed legislation on interrogating terrorist suspects that propelled them into unfamiliar territory.

"None of us feels comfortable speaking out publicly," said retired Rear Adm. John D. Hutson, who served as the Navy's judge advocate general from 1997 to 2000 and presided over the JAG corps' 1,600 members. "That's not the nature of what military officers do.... [But we] care very, very much about the country and the military — and that's why [we] are speaking out."

... The retired officers believe that the negative consequences of the president's anti-terror policies could have been avoided if the administration had followed traditional military practices.

... Retired Brig. Gen. James P. Cullen was chief judge of the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals. "I grew up in an Army where the rules were very clear and where servicemen and women had no question about what their obligations and responsibilities were under both the Geneva Convention and our domestic law," he said. "When you have a winking-and-nodding policy [as was the case at Abu Ghraib], that just brings about the consequences that we came to view at [the prison]."

What further fuels the officers' outrage is that the policies they believe have undermined the military were mostly formulated by men, like Bush, who have not seen combat. <More at: www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-op-kaiser24sep24,0_5305036.story?>

maybe general Craddock should check with his corporal?

Legend has it that Napoleon Bonaparte always had a scroungy looking corporal standing near him in his command tent. When asked why the soldier was always there, Bonaparte replied, "I read him my orders. If he understands them then my Marshals should understand them as well."

General: "What Constitutes 'Outrages on Personal Dignity'?"

Kathleen T. Rhem - American Forces Press Service

...Army Gen. Bantz J. Craddock, commander of U.S. Southern Command, said "outrages on personal dignity" -- outlawed by Common Article 3 -- is an overly ambiguous term that could lead to trouble for U.S. servicemembers trying to understand rules for interrogations.

"In the military, we like 'tasks, conditions and standards,'" he said. "We need to know what it is we have to do, the conditions under which we do it, and we want to know the standard, the level of expertise required. What is it that we must reach?"

Craddock told a group of Pentagon reporters he'd like to see the article defined more clearly because "outrages on personal dignity" can mean different things to different people.

"I don't know what an outrage on personal dignity is. It's in the eye of the beholder," he said. "Look, I pledged a fraternity. I felt I had some outrages on personal dignity, but others didn't feel that way."

<More at: <http://www.defenselink.mil//News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=1088>

this quotation doesn't seem to gibe with other recent statements on torture

"The words of the Universal Declaration are as true today as they were when they were written,"

George W. Bush 19 September 2006
Speech to the United Nations General Assembly

Among the 30 rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are these:

--"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

--"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

--"Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law."

--"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

--"Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him."

-- "Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense."

--"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

--"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

--"Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein."

Apparently they once understood it

Summary of National Security Strategy 2002

"The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere. These nonnegotiable demands of human dignity are protected most securely in democracies. The United States Government will work to advance human dignity in word and deed, speaking out for freedom and against violations of human rights and allocating appropriate resources to advance these ideals."

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionII.html>

others certainly do

Article 1, Clause 1 of Germany's constitution

"Human dignity is inalienable. To respect and to protect it is the duty of all state authority."

Section 1a and 2 of Israel's "Basic Law"

1. The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

2. There shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person as such.

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

A final afterthought

The army's "soldier's creed" as it was since the '60s	The army's "soldier's creed" as it was changed in 2003 and now called the "warrior ethos"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am an American Soldier. - I am a member of the United States Army -- a protector of the greatest nation on earth. - Because I am proud of the uniform I wear, I will always act in ways creditable to the military service and the nation it is sworn to guard. - I am proud of my own organization. I will do all I can to make it the finest unit in the Army. - I will be loyal to those under whom I serve. I will do my full part to carry out orders and instructions given to me or my unit. - As a soldier, I realize that I am a member of a time-honored profession--that I am doing my share to keep alive the principles of freedom for which my country stands. - No matter what the situation I am in, I will never do anything, for pleasure, profit, or personal safety, which will disgrace my uniform, my unit, or my country. - I will use every means I have, even beyond the line of duty, to restrain my Army comrades from actions disgraceful to themselves and to the uniform. - I am proud of my country and its flag. - I will try to make the people of this nation proud of the service I represent, for I am an American Soldier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am an American Soldier, - I am a Warrior and a member of a team. - I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army Values. - I will always place the mission first. - I will never accept defeat. - I will never quit. - I will never leave a fallen comrade. - I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, - Trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. - I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself. - I am an expert and I am a professional. - I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat. - I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life. - I am an American Soldier.

I see the difference - do you?
I think it is significant - don't you?
I know which I prefer - do you?

There once was another "Soldier's Ethos" as elucidated by General of the Army George Catlett Marshall. It was simply:

"A hatred of war, and an avoidance of politics."

What happened?