

SOUND OFF!



VOL. III, NO 5

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”

25 OCTOBER 2007

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

WHEN IT COMES TO VETERANS, PRIOR PLANNING NOT REQUIRED

Do you remember when you learned how to plan? Was it the US government who taught you (after your parents gave you grief for a decade or so for never planning)? That's the way it was for me.

It started with the simple things.

If I had to be in a work formation at 6 AM then I had to get up early enough to dress, make my bed, shave, shower, sh*t, and shine my boots, do whatever barracks duties were mine for the day (clean a latrine, fire a water heater, sweep a floor) and be in formation at 5:59:55. Simple planning. Do it wrong and no weekend pass.

It quickly got more complicated. As a squad leader and then a platoon sergeant I had to plan for all of the non-planners in my group, but it was my responsibility. I had to get them all up in time to do all the routine things and still be some place on time. I had to plan a class if I was to be the instructor. I had to train the weak ones as part of my plan to accomplish some exercise. I had to be sure that I and all of my men had enough training, knowledge, and supplies to get the next phase done (while I planned for the phase beyond and the one beyond that). Do it wrong and turn in my stripes, or at least be satisfied with the number I already had.

In OCS it was plan for the three or four day exercise – support equipment, weapons, food, ammo, shelter, fuel, transportation, medical support, resupply, tactical planning, contingency planning. I also had to make sure that my classmates planned too, and if they didn't, make up for their weakness or kiss my commission goodbye.

In staff college it was plan the battle. My first big one was an airmobile insertion. What is the objective? What's the enemy situation – strength, condition, fortifications, reinforcements? When must the force be on the objective? In what strength? What is the plan of attack? What training or instructions do my men need before departure? What will the weather be? What's the comms situation; does everyone know and have the SOI? How many copies do I need? How long will it take to reach the objective? How many helicopters will I need to get there? What are the possible assembly areas? What aids will I need to give the pre-op briefing? How will I

get fuel to the AA for the helicopters to top off before the assault. Will there be gunships too? With whom do I have to coordinate to arrange for tactical fires and CAS? How will I consolidate the objective? How long before we are relieved? What does that mean in initial supplies of ammo, food, fuel? How do I resupply? In what quantities? How often? Can I medevac or do I have to take more medical support? How does that affect my transportation planning? How will we withdraw after relief, or will we go forward with the relieving force? What supplies or transportation will we need after relief, regardless? Do it right or the mission fails. Do it very well or too many die.

As a systems developer later in my career it was plan electronic systems for the force. What are the requirements? Who are the legitimate bidders? How long is the development cycle? What support is needed to the contractor during development? How will we test? How many do we need? What is the budget? What is the system life expectancy? What is the expected maintenance and repair process? Where will maintenance and repair take place – unit, depot, manufacturer? How will we train the user? How will we resupply the system? How will we accept the system and its support items? How will we deploy the system? What units get the system, in what numbers, and on what schedule? How will we upgrade it as technology improves? Who does the system interoperate with? Do they know what we are developing. Have they been brought into the planning – how will I get them in to the game? When the system is obsolete, how will we dispose of it? Do it wrong and the project fails.

A long story, but it shows that military planning in particular is complex, and unless it is thorough – unless it considers not just the objective and the desired end result, but how one gets there, who the people involved are and what they need, what procedures are necessary to do some act or cause it to be done, what the alternatives and contingencies are to a plan and how they will be handled, and how the exercise, campaign or task will be handled throughout its entire life cycle – it is, by definition, PPPP - Piss Poor Prior Planning.

PPPP always has bad results, unless sheer luck saves you.

How, then, does one plan for a war? It seems to me the planning must be far more thorough than any other kind of planning. It certainly should be more complete than how teenagers plan for their next date – go, do something, and see what happens.

In the current conflict, many of the planners would have been fired, demoted, or otherwise punished for PPPP at almost every stage of the game. Accomplishing some things well and royally screwing up others, they apparently gave almost no consideration to the “life cycle” of the war. Regardless of the delimiting times in history books, wars go on until the last victim dies. If those victims are your own soldiers, and they always are, then it is until the last veteran dies.

I was never allowed to ignore all of the steps after “deploy”. Obviously, the administration, the legislature, and the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are not required to consider the long and lingering end result of their actions, except in the most cursory manner. They even give themselves great marks for underestimating the effects of their actions – “Look at me! I kept the budget down.”

How can anyone plan a war who doesn’t plan for the thousands who will need robust support for the balance of their lives? Support, not charity. It is an intrinsic part of the earned gratitude of the nation. Volunteer or conscript, these citizens answered a call that the rest of the citizenry did not, and they must be supported – forever if needed.

The Army has a manual – FM 101-10-1/2: Staff Officer’s Field Manual - that assists in determining losses, particularly SECTION IV. Personnel Losses, Loss Estimates, And Replacements. It may be out

of date, but it shows that it once was the responsibility of planners to determine how many people would be wounded or killed as a result of various types of actions. Yes, they did it to plan for the continued readiness of the force – but they did it! Apparently it is not required now. Certainly no one seems to be updating the manual.

Instead, planning and budgeting depends on after-the-fact reaction to reported losses. That planning gets skewed as we, apparently for PR purposes, minimize the reports of losses. So while every death is reported accurately, the Defense Department reports 27,750+ wounded, but the DVA reports 48,500+ diagnosed cases of PTSD so far! Congress’ budgeting action looks as if it depends upon the PR reports instead of the facts, as they consistently estimate and fund at about a quarter to a third of what is really needed to provide both immediate, and where necessary, life-long support.

I have a proposal.

In the future, when the Congress or the President or whoever is using the Constitution that day decides to go to war, any evidence of PPPP should be grounds for dismissal, impeachment, or any punishment that fits the job. Every such decision should include the full cost of going to war. When the threat is great, the cost be hanged. But we must know the full cost sooner or later. And we must establish that the costs stop only when the last veteran has died. [Ed.]

“He who every morning plans the transaction of the day and follows out that plan, carries a thread that will guide him through the maze of the most busy life. But where no plan is laid, where the disposal of time is surrendered merely to the chance of incidence, chaos will soon reign.”
Victor Hugo (1802 - 1885)

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

NEED LEGAL HELP IN AN APPEAL TO THE DVA?

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

WAKE UP! SPREAD THE NEWS!

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

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE!

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

GETTING HELP TO THOSE WHO NEED IT

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

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

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

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

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

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

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

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY!

A MEMBER HAS OFFERED TO MATCH YOUR DONATION, DOLLAR- FOR-DOLLAR, UP TO \$1,000, BETWEEN NOW AND THANKSGIVING.

IT'S TIME TO PITCH IN!

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

SUBJECT: AN ENCOUNTER AT THE EYES WIDE OPEN EXHIBIT - OCTOBER 13, 2007

I sat just about all day at the Ohio Eyes Wide Open exhibit in Yellow Springs on Saturday. The Yellow Springs Street Fair is one of the largest festivals in our area, and we had a great location. People had to walk right past the flag in the picture from one of the parking areas. Hard to miss that the boots were there. A couple of folks actually rode their bikes through the boots, and I saw one frustrated looking person hurriedly pushing a wheelchair through them trying to get to wherever he was going -- but without actually ever looking at where he was. Most people walked by the 179 boots, standing in formation, without even GLANCING at them. They might as well have been a display of soda cans. A few stopped, looked at the tag on one of the boots, and then walked on, and a very few actually spent any time actually looking through them.

Yesterday was quieter, since the Street Fair wasn't on, and a lot of local folks came to see the exhibit and take time to really look at it. Later in the day, an older couple got out of their car, and headed for the exhibit. The 2 of us sitting with the exhibit looked at each other, and both said we thought there was trouble coming. His ball cap said he was a Vietnam veteran and he had his fists firmly on his hips, and she had a pinched, unhappy look on her face. We waited to be yelled at or at least told off, which doesn't happen often, but has happened before and is never pleasant.



They walked slowly through the boots stopping occasionally to check a name tag, carefully looked at the boots representing Matt Maupin (brown ones in the photo), read the poster about the suicide of Doug Barber, and then much to my amazement walked over to the table where there were materials to put messages on small squares of fabric, much like Buddhist prayer flags, and which were then attached to a rope strung between the trees. We try to leave folks a wide berth to experience the exhibit in solitude, but when he went to hang their pieces on the rope, I approached the woman, and ask if they had come looking for a particular pair of boots, since they almost seemed sort of lost. She then told me no, that he was a Vietnam veteran, and was suffering from terrible PTSD. She added that it was so awful for him to see and hear what was happening to the young troops today, which only intensified his own nightmare. She said the services offered by the VA for Vietnam veterans "just didn't have enough hours in the day" to be the kind of help he really needed. He returned to where we were talking, and they both talked about how war was not going to accomplish anything in Iraq, about the wounded vets (he had many, obvious scars himself), and the nightmare of PTSD and the inadequacy of the VA to deal with all of that now as well as in the future. Before they left, they thanked us for the exhibit. I hope 30 years from now, our kids will not be suffering as he is.

After they had driven away, I went over to see what they had written. His said simply that he was a disabled Vietnam veteran who hoped the war would end. Hers said she hoped the world would find a way to peace without war.

Beth GrandmaBeth@aol.com

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

ONE IMPORTANT BILL AND FOUR INSIGNIFICANT ONES, BUT ALL TOUTED AS "VETERANS LEGISLATION" ~ THAT'S LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR YOU!

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONSIDER VETERANS LEGISLATION

October 22, 2007

Washington, D.C. – Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Bob Filner, announced that a package of bills to honor our nation's veterans will be considered in the House of Representatives on October 23. Chairman Filner (D-CA) urges his colleagues to support the legislative package which includes a bill to implement a veterans suicide prevention program at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[H.R. 327](#) – The Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans

H.R. 1808 – To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia, as the "Charlie Norwood Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center"; H.R. 2408 – To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as the "Milo C. Huempfer Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic"; H.Res. 680 – Condemning the actions of September 7, 2007, resulting in damage to the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial; H.Res. 237 – Supporting and encouraging greater support for Veterans Day each year <www.vawatchdog.org/07/hcva07/hcva102207-1.htm>

ANOTHER IMPORTANT ONE

TUITION BILL LETS TROOPS PAY IN-STATE RATE

Rick Maze - Staff writer - Oct 12, 2007

A House committee is considering a bill that could lower college tuition costs for active-duty service members, their spouses and their children. The bill, [HR 3780](#), would require states to charge in-state tuition rates for military families that are living in a state on government orders. The in-state discount can make a huge difference. The College Board, a nonprofit group made up of more than 5,300 colleges and universities, reports the average in-state tuition was \$4,081 last year but \$10,418 for out-of-state residents.

Getting in-state tuition has been a major push for military associations but they have faced a variety of hurdles, including reluctance in Congress to tell state-run colleges how much they can charge. Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Texas, the bill's chief sponsor, said he hopes to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include a military clause promising in-state tuition for military families living in or stationed in a state. <More at: www.airforcetimes.com/news/2007/10/military_collegetuition_071012w/>

AND YET ANOTHER

AKAKA INTRODUCES BILL TO ENHANCE VA PAIN CARE

October 15, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and fellow Committee member Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), introduced legislation that would enhance the Department of Veterans Affairs'

pain management program. The Veterans Pain Care Act of 2007 would assist in focusing attention on pain management as a new generation of veterans suffering from pain enter VA's health care system.

This legislation seeks to significantly bolster VA's existing pain management efforts and bring them up to par at a national, system-wide level. Under the bill, VA would be required to establish a pain care initiative at every VA health care facility, with each utilizing a professionally recognized pain assessment tool or process to ensure that every patient with chronic or acute pain is diagnosed and treated properly. <More at: www.vawatchdog.org/07/scva07/scva101507-1.htm>

SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS FIELD HEARING ON PERSONAL COSTS OF VA CLAIMS BACKLOG

October 10, 2007

New Windsor, New York— A Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs field hearing held yesterday on the personal costs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability claims backlog illustrated that the bureaucratic morass of VA weighs heavily on disabled veterans and their families.

... Michael Walcoff, VA associate deputy undersecretary for field operations, told the subcommittee the primary contributing factors to the backlog are an increasing workload, and an increasingly complex nature of that workload.

"The number of veterans filing initial disability compensation claims and claims for increased benefits has increased every year since FY 2000. Disability claims from returning Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans as well as from veterans of earlier periods of war increased from 578,773 in fiscal year (FY) 2000 to 806,382 in FY 2006, an increase of nearly 38 percent," said Walcoff. "For FY 2007, disability claims receipts were up four percent through August compared to the same time last year. Additionally, VA received a record high of 80,383 claims for a single month in August 2007. This high level of claims activity is expected to continue over the next few years." <More at: www.vawatchdog.org/07/hcva07/hcva101007-1.htm>

RETREAT – NEWS

DON'T TAKE CARE OF THE TROOPS! BUY SOME MORE F-35s SO THAT WE CAN FIGHT OFF THE SOVIET MENACE! (Ooops, they aren't around anymore are they?)

AS BENEFITS FOR VETERANS CLIMB, MILITARY SPENDING FEELS SQUEEZE

Greg Jaffe - Staff Reporter - THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Congress's Generosity May Hurt Weapons, Other Programs

WASHINGTON—With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan badly straining its forces, the Pentagon is facing an awkward problem: Military retirees and their families are absorbing billions of dollars that military leaders would rather use to help troops fighting today.

Congress, pressured by veterans groups, has in recent years boosted military pensions, health insurance and benefits for widows of retirees. Internal Pentagon documents forecast that the lawmakers' generosity since 1999 will force the federal government to find about \$100 billion over the next six years to cover the new benefits.

"The amounts have gotten to the point where they are hurtful. They are taking away from the nation's ability to defend itself," says David Chu, the Pentagon's undersecretary for personnel and readiness. <More at: <http://webreprints.djreprints.com/1156160669825.html>>

SIX-FIGURE BONUSES RETAIN U.S. COMMANDOS

Richard Lardner - Oct 11, 2007

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Pentagon has paid more than \$100 million in bonuses to veteran Green Berets and Navy SEALs, reversing the flow of top commandos to the corporate world where security companies such as Blackwater USA are offering big salaries. The retention effort, started nearly three years ago and overseen by U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla., has helped preserve a small but elite group of enlisted troops with vast experience fighting the unconventional wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Defense Department statistics. Overall, more than 1,200 of the military's most specialized personnel near or already eligible for retirement have opted for payments of up to \$150,000 in return for staying in uniform several more years. <More at: <http://apnews.excite.com/article/20071011/D8S7BH600.html>>

U.S. ARMY LOWERS ITS RECRUITING STANDARDS

Aamer Madhani - Washington Bureau - October 11, 2007

WASHINGTON The U.S. Army met its recruiting goals for the last year but enlisted thousands of new soldiers with criminal records and fewer who have earned high school diplomas, according to figures released Wednesday.

The spike of new enlistees given "character" waivers for fiscal 2007 continues a steady upward trend in the number of recruits with past arrests and convictions allowed into the Army since the start of the war in Iraq. More than 11 percent of the Army recruits needed waivers for problems with the law -- up from 7.9 percent the previous year and more than double the percentage in 2003, the year the U.S. invaded Iraq. <More at: www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-recruit11oct11.0.4222162.story>

ARMY DEFENDS RECRUITMENT STANDARDS

Associated Press - October 10, 2007

WASHINGTON - The Army last year again increased the number of its recruits who have prior criminal records by granting them special exceptions. The Pentagon's top personnel official defended the policy, saying it's so stringent that many in Congress would have difficulty getting into the military today, too, because of things they did in their youth.

The military routinely grants waivers to recruits with past criminal behavior, medical problems or low aptitude scores that would otherwise disqualify them from service. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,152240,00.html>

MANY TROOPS UNPREPARED FOR IEDS

United Press International - October 18, 2007

WASHINGTON - An investigation has found nearly 15,000 U.S. troops serving in Iraq did not receive training against improvised explosive devices before deployment. The USA Today investigation found three of the 20 U.S. Army combat brigades currently serving in Iraq did not have time before deployment to receive advanced IED defense training at Fort Irwin's National Training Center or either of the two other training facilities before they were sent to Iraq, the newspaper said.

<More at: www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2007/10/17/many_troops_unprepared_for_ieds/8818/>

U.S. PRISON WARDEN GETS 2-YEAR JAIL TERM

Times Staff Writer - October 20, 2007

BAGHDAD — Army Lt. Col. William H. Steele was sentenced Friday to two years in prison for possession of classified materials, disobeying an order and having an inappropriate relationship with an interpreter.

<More at: www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/middleeast/la-fg-steele20oct20.1.6494080.story>

GENERAL CLAIMS BUSH GAVE 'MARCHING ORDERS' ON AGGRESSIVE INTERROGATION AT GUANTANAMO

Nick Juliano - 10/22/2007

More than 100,000 pages of newly released government documents demonstrate how US military interrogators "abused, tortured or killed" scores of prisoners rounded up since Sept. 11, 2001, including some who were not even expected of having terrorist ties, according to a just-published book.

... President Bush gave "marching orders" to Gen. Michael Dunlavey, who asked the Pentagon to approve harsher interrogation methods at Guantanamo, the general claims in documents reported in the book. The ACLU also found that an Army investigator reported Rumsfeld was "personally involved" in overseeing the interrogation of a Guantanamo prisoner Mohammed al Qahtani. The prisoner was forced to parade naked in front of female interrogators wearing women's underwear on his head and was led around on a leash while being forced to perform dog tricks.

<More at: http://rawstory.com/news/2007/General_claims_Bush_gave_marching_orders_1022.html>

MILITARY SPENDING: UP AND AWAY

Peter Grier - Wed Oct 24, 2007

Washington - Whatever the merits of US military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, one thing seems clear: It's very expensive. If this week's White House request for \$196 billion more for Afghanistan and Iraq is included, total costs for these operations will reach about \$808 billion by the end of next year, according to figures compiled by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA). That's more than the Gulf War (\$88 billion in today's dollars), or Korea (\$456 billion), or Vietnam (\$518 billion). It's within shouting distance of the price of the Korea and Vietnam conflicts combined. <More at: www.csmonitor.com/2007/1024/p01s08-usec.html>

WARS MAY COST \$2.4 TRILLION OVER DECADE

Anne Flaherty - Oct 24

WASHINGTON (AP) - The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could cost as much as \$2.4 trillion through the next decade, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday. The White House brushed off the analysis as "speculation." The estimate was the most comprehensive and far-reaching one to date. It factored in costs previously not counted and assumed that large number of forces would remain in the regions. <More at: <http://apnews.excite.com/article/20071024/D8SFQOKG0.html>>

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTRACTS FOR 2,400 MORE MRAP VEHICLES

Jim Garamone - American Forces Press Service - Oct 19, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Defense Department has let contracts for an additional 2,400 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles, bringing the total number of the vehicles ordered to 8,800.

"We're going to do everything we can to get as many vehicles in theater as fast as we can," a senior Pentagon official, speaking on background, said yesterday. <More at: www.marcomsyscom.usmc.mil/news/syscomnews.nsf/StoriesDisplayExt/71697D69E8D79A328525737A00608A0F>

LOOKS AS IF THERE ARE SOME WHO DON'T AGREE

MARINES URGE CAUTION ON MRAP FIELDING

Military.com - Christian Lowe - October 19, 2007

Marine commanders in Iraq are asking the Pentagon to slow down deployment of IED-resistant vehicles in order to give them more time to figure out how best to employ the heavily-armored trucks, a top Corps official Wednesday.

... "I would say 'relax,' we don't know how we're going to use them, nobody does," said Brig. Gen. select Larry Nicholson, deputy commander of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command based in Quantico, Va. "

<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,153219,00.html>

IT'S WORTH IT TO CLICK THROUGH AND READ THIS WHOLE ARTICLE

AT AN ARMY SCHOOL, BLUNT TALK ON IRAQ

Elisabeth Bumiller - October 14, 2007

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — Here at the intellectual center of the United States Army, two elite officers were deep in debate at lunch on a recent day over who bore more responsibility for mistakes in Iraq — the former defense secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, or the generals who acquiesced to him.

"The secretary of defense is an easy target," argued one of the officers, Maj. Kareem P. Montague, 34, a Harvard graduate and a commander in the Third Infantry Division that was the first to reach Baghdad in the 2003 invasion. "It's easy to pick on the political appointee."

"But he's the one that's responsible," retorted Maj. Michael J. Zinno, 40, a military planner who worked at the headquarters of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the former American civilian administration in Iraq.

No, Major Montague shot back, it was more complicated: the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the top commanders were part of the decision to send in a small invasion force and not enough troops for the occupation. Only Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, the Army chief of staff who was sidelined after he told Congress that it would take several hundred thousand troops in Iraq, spoke up in public.

"You didn't hear any of them at the time, other than General Shinseki, screaming, saying that this was untenable," Major Montague said. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2007/10/14/us/14army.html>

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

America's "enhanced interrogation" techniques have a grotesque provenance: "Verschärft Vernehmung", enhanced or intensified interrogation, was the exact term innovated by the Gestapo to describe what became known as the 'third degree.' It left no marks. It included hypothermia, stress positions and long-time sleep deprivation."

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Notes
10/26		El Paso, TX	Resource Fair	Camille Castillo	915-843-2158
10/26		Lake City, FL	Resource Fair	Thomas Allen	386-755-9026 x3122
10/26		St. Cloud, MN	Resource Fair	Lori Helget	320-656-6101
10/29	100 - 1400	Palace Station Hotel 2411 W. Sahara Ave, Las Vegas, NV	Career Fair		702 367-2411
10/30		Laporte, CO	Resource Fair	Sharon Lindell	303-514-0438
11/1-4		Bartlem Park Cheshire, CT	Wall that Heals	Cheshire High School	

11/2		East Point, GA	Resource Fair	Freddie Lee/Sylvester Wallace	404-321-6111 x-3296
11/2		Huntsville, AL	Stand Down	Sandra Childress	256-684-6521
11/3	1000 - 1500	Clackamas Community College 19600 Molalla Avenue Oregon City, OR	Military Job & Benefit Fair		
11/8		Houston, TX	Resource Fair	Tom Mitchell	832-203-1626
11/8	1100 * 1400	Holiday Inn, Los Angeles Int'l Airport 9901 LA CIENEGA BLVD, LA	Career Fair	Everhart Museum	310-649-5151
11/8-12		Everhart Museum Scranton, PA	Wall that Heals		
11/9		Las Cruces, NM	Resource Fair	Susan Campbell	505-523-2219
11/9		Roanoke, VA	Resource Fair	Gayle Sanford	540-982-2463 x1230
11/9		Albuquerque, NM	Resource Fair	Larry J. Campos	505-841-8517
11/10		Los Angeles, CA	Resource Fair	Doris Nickelson	310-518-1855
Let us know about meetings and gatherings and we will advertise them					

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

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

BUSH ASKS CONGRESS TO FIX VA SYSTEM

Associated Press - October 17, 2007

WASHINGTON - President Bush pushed Congress on Tuesday to help modernize the government's inefficient system that cares for wounded veterans of war. The president said his administration had implemented most recommendations made in July by the bipartisan Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, and now it was Congress' turn to finish the job. Bush sent legislation to Capitol Hill for implementing those recommendations that require legislative action.

<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,153002,00.html>

RETIREMENT PAY IS ALREADY A THIRD GREATER FOR NEW VETS, SO NOW DISABILITY PAY WILL BE ALSO. MUST COST US OLD TIMERS LESS TO LIVE!

DISABILITY PAY UPGRADE FOR NEW VETS

Tom Philpott - October 19, 2007

Bush's Disability Pay Plan Targets New Generation of Vets

President Bush's plan to reform the disability compensation system, which he sent to Congress Tuesday, includes a four-part payment scheme targeted exclusively at a newer generation of service members and veterans. The plan is ambitious in scope and more generous than the current disability system. As proposed by the White House, it would be applied automatically only to future disabled veterans. It would be offered as an alternative to current disability benefits only for veterans separated or retired from service since Oct. 7, 2001, the day of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. <More at: www.military.com/features/0,15240,153107,00.html>

PENTAGON SET TO LAUNCH NEW DISABILITY SYSTEM

William H. McMichael - Staff writer - Oct 21, 2007

The Defense Department will soon unveil a new, streamlined disability evaluation system that, in tandem with the Department of Veterans Affairs, will replace the current cumbersome process with a single exam and single disability rating. According to a copy of the plan obtained by Military Times and confirmed by Pentagon officials, veterans medically retired from service will be able to apply for, and get, VA benefits immediately. <More at: www.navytimes.com/news/2007/10/military_jointdisability_071018w/>

VETERAN STRESS CASES UP SHARPLY

Gregg Zoroya - USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The number of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans seeking treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder from the Department of Veterans Affairs jumped by nearly 20,000 — almost 70% — in the 12 months ending June 30, VA records show. More than 100,000 combat veterans sought help for mental illness since the start of the war in Afghanistan in 2001, about one in seven of those who have left active duty since then, according to VA records collected through June. Almost half of those were PTSD cases. The numbers do not include thousands treated at storefront Vet Centers operated by the department across the country. Nor do they include active-duty personnel diagnosed with the disorder or former servicemembers who have not sought VA treatment. <More at: www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-10-18-veterans-stress_N.htm>

PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Bob Koehler - Op-Ed News - Oct 20, 2007

Deep in the heart of the postwar hell that awaits many injured and emotionally shattered vets lies a memo so toxic with cynical irony it deserves to be posted on americasarmy.com, the U.S. Army's official teen-entrapment Web site.

"We can't fix every Soldier. We have to hold Soldiers accountable for their behavior. Everyone in life beyond babies, the insane, and the demented and mentally retarded have to be held accountable for what they do in life."

Got that, Soldier? - These are the words ... of Col. Steven Knorr, a psychiatrist and chief of the Behavioral Health Unit at Fort Carson, Colo., to his staff. Knorr is the officer who oversaw the discharge of thousands of soldiers, many suffering brain damage and other IED-related physical and psychological injuries, on the specious diagnosis "personality disorder," a "pre-existing condition" the Army shrinks pulled out of their hats, which meant the GIs weren't qualified for disability pay or even medical care. Billions of taxpayer dollars were saved. <More at: www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_bob_koeh_071018_pre_existing_conditi.htm>

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

Donna Miles - American Forces Press Service - Oct 19, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Defense leaders joined the Minnesota National Guard's adjutant general yesterday in urging Congress to revise the Montgomery GI Bill to improve coverage for reserve-component troops, although they didn't necessarily agree on the best way to accomplish that. Army Maj. Gen. Larry W. Shellito told the House Veterans Affairs Committee that the bill, as currently written, shortchanges National Guard and Reserve troops.

He noted that nearly half the Minnesota National Guard's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, found they weren't eligible for full education benefits under the bill, despite being one of the longest-serving units in Iraq. The unit returned home from a 22-month mobilization that included 16 months in combat as part of the surge force in Iraq. All the returning "Red Bull" troops were eligible for Montgomery GI Bill benefits, but many fell short of the service time required to receive full benefits.

<More at: www.armywives.com/index.php/component?option=com_content/task/view/id.3212/Itemid.2/>

ARMY TO CONTINUE TROOP SERVICE EXTENSIONS

Associated Press - October 18, 2007

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Army will continue to rely on an unpopular program that forces some soldiers to stay on beyond their retirement or re-enlistment dates, despite repeated pressure from Defense Secretary Robert Gates to reduce and eventually eliminate the practice. Lt. Gen. Michael Rochelle, deputy chief of staff for personnel, said Thursday that the number of soldiers kept on duty has actually increased in recent months as a result of President Bush's orders to increase troop levels in Iraq this year to help quell the violence. The number of those being kept on beyond their commitment - through a program known as "stop loss" - is about 9,000 now, compared to about 7,000 before the troop buildup began in late January, he said.

<More at: www.usatoday.com/news/military/2007-10-18-stop-loss_N.htm>

WHEN SERVICE LIMITS OPTIONS

Christian Davenport - Washington Post Staff Writer - October 14, 2007; A14

Angela Rooker was proud of her military service and it showed: On her résumé she listed her membership in the Air National Guard prominently, highlighting her rise through the ranks and her position as the executive officer of a maintenance group. But the more job interviews she went to in the civilian world, the more she was asked whether she was going to be deployed to Iraq -- and the more she came to believe her membership in the Guard was a hindrance, not an asset. Finally, after a year of searching unsuccessfully for a position in the high-tech industry, she reduced her 22 years of military service to a single line on Page 2 of her résumé: "Military Service: United States Air Force."

"As soon as they figured out I was still very much obligated to the military, it changed the tone of the interview quite a bit," said Rooker, a captain in the California Air National Guard. "Nobody wants to hire a key person that may get deployed."
 <More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/13/AR2007101301208_pf.html>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF OCTOBER 17, 2007

This week, the Army and Marine Corps announced an increase, while the Navy and Air Force announced a decrease. The Coast Guard number remained unchanged. The net collective result is 477 more reservists mobilized than last week. At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 70,882; Navy Reserve, 5,805; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,308; Marine Corps Reserve, 7,012; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 292. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been mobilized to 91,299, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2007/d20071017nqr.pdf.

TWO FEMALE SAILORS FATALLY SHOT

Associated Press - October 22, 2007

CAIRO, Egypt - A U.S. Navy Sailor allegedly shot and killed two female Sailors early Monday in the barracks of a American military base in Bahrain, a Navy official said. The alleged shooter, a male, was critically wounded in the shooting at the U.S. Naval Support Activity Bahrain base, said the Navy official, who was not authorized to release the information to the media and spoke on condition of anonymity. <More at: www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,303840,00.html>

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2007

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	3,837
WOUNDED US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1]	28,171
OTHER US CASUALTIES [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1]	≥29,184
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [LAST DoD UPDATE 10/1]	128
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	4
KILLED UK	171
KILLED OTHER COALITION	132
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	819
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [LAST DoD UPDATE 6/30]	1,001
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 47,555
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 82,639[LANCET-1,083,070]
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 400,000+[LANCET- 1,414,723]
IRAQ REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL [9/15]	2.1M/2. 5M

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US (10/24/2007)	450
*OTHER CASUALTIES US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 12/2006]	5,862
KILLED COALITION (6/2007)	278
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2006)	1,472
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (7/2004)	32,034
AFGHAN REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL	1.75M/4.8M
COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE [9/24]	\$458,513,849,752

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

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

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

AFTERTHOUGHTS ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

DOONESBURY CREATOR, MILITARY BLOGGERS COMPILE NEW BOOK

American Forces Press Service - October 19, 2007

WASHINGTON - War can inspire great writing, like a series of superlative dispatches from servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan compiled in a new book that offers an arresting glimpse of life on the front lines. Conceived by Garry Trudeau, creator of the long-running, satirical comic strip Doonesbury, "[The Sandbox](#)" is a 309-page compilation of roughly 90 online journal entries penned by scores of the military's most talented scribes.

"In fascinating and compelling posts, Soldiers write passionately, eloquently and movingly of their day-to-day lives, of their mission, and of the drama that unfolds daily around them," Trudeau said during an interview at the Pentagon yesterday.
>More at: www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/25310/>

ADD-ON ~ THE LAW AND THE RESERVE COMPONENTS

MILITARY RESERVES FEDERAL CALL UP AUTHORITY

Rod Powers - Your Guide to U.S. Military

In 1973, DOD adopted the total force policy, which recognized that active and reserve U.S. military forces should be readily available to support military operations. As a result, reserve forces were no longer considered to be forces of last resort; rather, they are now recognized as indispensable to the nation's defense from the earliest days of a conflict. In addition, the reserves' peacetime support to the active forces has taken on increased importance in areas such as peacekeeping missions, counterdrug operations, disaster aid, and exercise support. The seven reserve components are the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.

The governor of each state can call the state's Army and Air National Guard units to active duty to help respond to domestic emergencies and disasters, such as those caused by hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes.

If additional help is needed, a governor can request federal assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). With a presidential declaration of disaster, FEMA's federal assistance can include additional military support from DOD (both active duty and reserve forces).

Federal Call-Up Authority

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(a) provides that, in time of war or national emergency declared by the Congress, the entire membership of all reserve components or any lesser number can be called to active duty for the duration of the war or national emergency plus 6 months. Although this statute normally is viewed as the call-up authority for responding to a major threat to national security, DOD stated that it could be used to activate reservists for a domestic emergency. However, it has never been used for this purpose.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12302 provides that, in time of national emergency declared by the President, up to 1 million members of the Ready Reserve can be called to active duty for not more than 24 consecutive months. Similar to the previous authority, DOD stated that this statute could also provide access to reservists for a domestic emergency, although it has never been used for this purpose.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12304 provides that, when the President determines that it is necessary to augment the active forces for any operational mission, up to 200,000 members of the Selected Reserve can be called to active duty for not more than 270 days. (Note: The FY 2007 Military Authorization Act changes the maximum from 270 days to 365 days). This is known as Presidential Selected Reserve Call-Up (PSRC) authority. This provision also states that no unit or member may be ordered to active duty under this authority to provide assistance to either the federal government or a state in time of a serious natural or manmade disaster, accident, or catastrophe. Thus, this authority cannot be used to access reservists for domestic emergencies.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(b) provides that at any time a service secretary can order any reservist to active duty for up to 15 days each year. This authority traditionally has been viewed as the authority allowing the services to enforce the reservists' 2-week annual training requirement. However, DOD's Office of General Counsel provided an interpretation in 1994 stating that this authority could be used for operational missions as well as annual active duty for training. The legal opinion noted that this authority could not be used if a unit or member had already completed 15 days of annual training for the calendar year. DOD stated, however, that this authority has not been used to call reservists involuntarily to active duty for a domestic emergency.

In addition to the involuntary activation of reservists under the above conditions, 10 U.S.C. 12301(d) provides for call-up of reservists who volunteer for active duty. The number of volunteer reservists called to active duty and the length of time they may be kept on active duty generally depends upon the availability of funds and the end-strength authorizations for the active force.

There is separate statutory authority allowing involuntary call-up of Coast Guard reservists during domestic emergencies. Under provisions of 14 U.S.C. 712, Coast Guard Ready Reservists can be involuntarily activated to support domestic emergencies. Each reservist may be required to serve up to 30 days in any 4-month period and up to 60 days in any 2-year period.

Above Information Courtesy of the U.S. General Accounting Office

<http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/guardandreserve/a/reservecallup.htm>

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