

# SOUND OFF!



VOL. V, NO 6

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

*“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”*

10 NOVEMBER 2009

## FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

### VETERANS DAY – THREE QUESTIONS

#### ***DOES ANYONE REMEMBER?***

Unlike Memorial Day, which is the day we honor our military dead, Veterans Day honors all who have served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States.

That really isn't very many people. Even though we are making new veterans every day, veterans are dying off faster than they are being replaced.

The VA reports and the Census Bureau confirms that as of the end of 2007 there were 24.8 million veterans. Of those, 18.7 million, or 75%, were wartime veterans.

Of all veterans, 73% are over 50 years old. There are as many World War II and Korean War veterans combined as there are veterans of the 19 years of the Gulf conflicts. There are half again as many Vietnam Veterans as there are veterans of the current conflicts.

Veterans of all eras represent only 8.1% of the total US population and they are dying at the rate of thousands per day. About 1,100 WWII vets die every day.

Vietnam Veterans are dying at an accelerated rate thanks to Agent Orange and other poisons. If you get *The Veteran*, the newspaper of the VVAW, and read the obituary pages you will be shocked at the ages listed there. In the last issue I read, 75% were under the age of 65, maybe more.

In short, we seem to be not only a fast-dying breed, but an unrecognized one as well. Our fellow citizens are more excited about buying a new mattress or a fancy fall outfit at the many “Veterans Day Sales” than they are about observing even one moment of silence in thanks for all that veterans have given them.

I decided to take the naïve approach and presume that if there was a Veterans Day sale someplace, it meant that you could get a break on the price of some item **IF AND ONLY IF** you were a veteran. I went to the website “VeteransDaySales.com” and found 1,762 listings from hundreds of merchants, none of which offered a single benefit to veterans.

I guess, if you have the bucks you can get the goods, and somehow that is supposed to honor veterans.

Quite a few had banners that said “We Salute Veterans” or “Honor Veterans”, but anyone could get the deal.

Thankfully, some merchants remember and make their advertising about veterans and not about merchandising deals. Some are simple like Snap-On Tools that starts, at least, with a real “Salute” to veterans, although it doesn't offer veterans any deals.

*A few good companies, however, do offer specific deals and discounts to serving military and veterans. See the **ADD ON ~ STUFF OF INTEREST** section at the end of this newsletter for a list of those deals that have come to my attention. [Ed.]*

We veterans are a quiet bunch, usually too reticent to raise our voices in protest when our fellow veterans are forgotten. Maybe it is about time we started shouting as much as others do. They get attention while we wait patiently for the government and particularly the VA to do its job as required by the law. Can't we make at least as much noise as the “Teabaggers?”

When I was young, Veterans Day was still Armistice Day. We had a parade and the veterans not just of WWI but of all wars were honored by their fellow citizens. I don't remember any sales. The bars and

restaurants threw their doors open where I lived and any veteran or active duty military could get a drink or a meal and pay little or nothing.

It was all part of the community welcoming the soldiers home – not just once, but every year, and thanking them for what they had done.

Sadly, no more. Wars are unpleasant and we Americans have become so soft that we refuse to contemplate unpleasant things. We can lose ourselves in our Facebook pages and drown ourselves in Twitter and then we don't have to face the reality of the world.

Too bad. If you ever climb out of your self-protective cocoons, my fellow Americans, give a thought to the small group of men and women who don the uniform every day for you.

They didn't fight to get "10% off their next purchase", and they didn't forget you!

### **DOES FT. HOOD MEAN ANYTHING FOR ALL OF US?**

I am not sure. But there is one thing I am sure of, and that is that MAJ Hasan is not all Muslims any more than he is all psychiatrists or all officers.

MAJ Hasan may have acted for religious reasons, as he saw them, or he may have gone over the edge after hearing the stories of hundreds of retuning soldiers, but one thing for sure is that MAJ Hasan cannot be an excuse for a new round of suspicion and hate against Muslims or Arabs, or others who are "unlike".

MAJ Hasan is an American who for whatever reason lost his way and allegedly committed an unspeakable crime against the innocent, and for that he should be tried, and if found guilty, convicted and sentenced, But MAJ Hasan cannot be the tipping point for condemning without trial anyone who looks like him, or who is his coreligionist, or who just doesn't fit someone's personal definition of "a real American." MAJ Hasan is also "a real American" in that he was born here, raised here, swore his oath here just as you and I did, and served here. He failed, but not everyone coming from his background fails.

If we veterans don't stand up for the innocence of all until proven guilty, then we fail our oath to the Constitution of the United States.

We cannot condemn all Muslims for MAJ Hasan's crimes any more than we can condemn all Catholics, Jews, or Protestants for the crimes of one of their own. Every group has its weaklings and failures, and that includes every religious group. Al Capone was

Catholic; Meyer Lansky was a Jew; Charles Manson was raised a Protestant.

Most of all, on this Veterans Day we can renew our commitment to the rule of law not men, and to the brotherhood of all that we embraced when we served.

### **SHOULD WE REMEMBER THE BERLIN WALL?**

By that question I mean should we remember it's existence, not just its fall 20 years ago this week?

I lived inside that wall for eight years in the 60s and 70s, and it was truly a remarkable time.

The Wall gave the Cold War a focus. We didn't have to imagine the Group of Soviet Forces Germany coming through the Fulda Gap someday. *Die Berliner Mauer* made it real.

There it was directly in front of us, every day, the proof of the oppression of the other side, and at least by derivation, the rightness of our side.

That focus wasn't there just for those of us who served in West Berlin. It was there every week in the press throughout the world. The message always was, "If you have to build a wall to keep your people in you cannot be right."

There is no such clear focus in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Often it has been impossible to discern the actual mission, let alone the reasons that the mission, whatever it is, is right and proper.

So while we are thankful that the Wall has gone, it can make those of us who long for a little more certainty in the exercise of our national power miss it for the focus it brought to that time.

None of us wants anything like the Wall to be the physical focus of the current conflicts, but I think we all would like to have a little more certainty that the course we are pursuing is right, that the mission is proper and doable, and that our brothers and sisters in uniform today are engaged in a fight that has at least the same moral purpose as the Cold War did.

That's the least that we can hope for them. That's the least we can hope for the Iraqis and Afghanis.

And for all of us.

***"Either we have hope within us or we don't; it is a dimension of the soul, an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart -- not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense."***

*Vaclav Havel*

[A thought to live by ~ Ed.]

## REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

### NEED LEGAL HELP IN AN APPEAL TO THE DVA?

Try these two websites: Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program [www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm](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 [www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/](http://www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/). Also this site for west coasters <http://www.chapman.edu/law/programs/clinics/amvets.asp>.

## ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

### VCS - VUFT LAWSUIT UPDATE:

Class Action Suit: On 12 August we appeared before the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. An article from the LA Times on 24 August summarizes the results so far < [latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/healthcare/la-me-veterans-suit24-2009aug24\\_0,1423297\\_story](http://latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/healthcare/la-me-veterans-suit24-2009aug24_0,1423297_story)>

#### .Case Progress to Date:

7/23/2007 Suit filed w/Federal District Court

9/25/2007 Defendant's Motion to Dismiss

2/11/2208 Motion for Preliminary Injunction

2/25/2008 Preliminary Injunction Hearing

4/21/2008 Trial

6/25/2008 Judgment based on jurisdiction

7/25/2008 Appeal notice filed w/9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals

12/10/2008 Appeal brief filed

12/15/2008 *Swords to Plowshares* and *Vietnam Veterans of America* file amicus briefs

12/22/2008 *Military Spouses for Change* and *United Spinal Association* file amicus briefs

3/4/2009 Appeal will not be subject to Mediation

4/6/2009 Requested an extension to reply to the DVA response to our brief

4/22/09 Extension granted to 1 May 2009

5/1/09 Appellants' Reply Brief filed

6/11/09 Oral Arguments Scheduled for 12 August 2009

8/12/09 Oral arguments

9/14/09 Reply on mediation [changed date]

9/14/09 No agreement on mediation. 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit accepts the case.

11/10/09 NTR

Here is a link to the legal [documents](#) on the lawsuit.

**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](#) "[Donate](#)" 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 [bhandy@vuft.org](mailto:bhandy@vuft.org) or the Vice Chair at [scook@vuft.org](mailto:scook@vuft.org). Watch for details at [www.vuft.org](http://www.vuft.org).

# D O N A T E !

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

### Good News on the Agent Orange Front

On November 2, 2009, I won the first ever VA claim for Agent Orange exposure, "inside the Continental United States." The claim was granted for Chloracne, Diabetes and Heart Disease with ICD implant, as due to Agent Orange exposure at Fort Gordon GA., in the years 1967-1969. You will be able to read the Board Of Veterans Appeals detailed decision along with the supporting evidence at [WWW.va.gov](http://WWW.va.gov) in a couple of months when it is posted. From the web site choose Board of Veterans Appeals, then click on Decisions. Next type in the search box Docket No. 08-11 937. Due to the AICD implant, Class 3 CHF and a LVEF of 25% there should be a 100% P&T award.

James M. Cripps  
Vietnam Veterans of America, Tennessee  
Agent Orange Committee Chairman.

## **THIS IS THE REAL DEAL! ~ YOU CAN SAVE A BUNDLE! (I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER SINCE 1963)**

I hope you agree that all men and women who have honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces deserve to do business with a financial services company that understands their unique needs, appreciates their service and does the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Your USAA Board of Directors believes so, and I am very pleased to let you know that USAA membership is now open to **anyone who has honorably served in the U.S. military.**

Starting with our first eligibility expansion in 1923, the USAA family has grown by embracing an ever-larger portion of America's active duty, retired and separated military members. Each time, we have been careful to ensure that USAA has the financial strength, the staff and the technology to maintain our high standards for exemplary member service, competitive pricing and value. Opening our doors today to all veterans who have honorably served, regardless of dates or length of service, fulfills our mission and leaves no one behind.

If you know veterans who honorably served but haven't become USAA members, please share this news with them by clicking on the "[Share USAA](#)" button so that they may know the value of USAA and, by joining, their spouses and children can enjoy the benefits of membership as well.

Sincerely, Josue (Joe) Robles Jr., Maj. General, USA (Ret.), President and CEO

## **RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS**

### **HOUSE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ADVANCES BILLS TO ENHANCE VETERAN PROTECTIONS**

October 28, 2009

Washington, D.C. – On Wednesday, October 28, 2009, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, led by Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA), approved two bills that would improve benefits and services to veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

H.R. 3949 – Veterans Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act of 2009 (Filner): The bill would: \* Clarify current law and require VA to verify that firms are veteran-owned small businesses or service disabled veteran-owned small businesses in order to be listed in the Vendor Information Pages database maintained by the VA Secretary; Improve outreach efforts at the VA; Establish a scholarship program for students learning to care for veterans with visual impairments; Permit a parent whose child gave their life in service to our country to be buried in a national cemetery with that child when their veteran child has no living spouse or children; Reauthorize the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education until the end of 2015; Expand the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act protections to service members seeking to cancel certain service contracts due to a change in duty station where such service is not provided; and, Amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to improve the equitable relief available for service members called to active duty, including allowing greater flexibility for family cell phone plans, rental leases, and motor vehicle leases when a service member has changed duty stations or been deployed.

H.R. 1168, as amended – Veterans Retraining Act of 2009 (Boozman): authorizes \$100 million per year to provide a living stipend and moving assistance to veterans who have been unemployed for at least 4 months, who are not eligible for training or education under the Department of Veterans Affairs, and are enrolled in a U.S. Department of Labor re-training program.

[Passed 7 November 2009] <More at: <http://veterans.house.gov/news/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=500>

### **AKAKA CALLS FOR PASSAGE OF OMNIBUS BILL FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

November 6, 2009

Legislation to help wounded veterans, caregivers, homeless veterans, women veterans and rural veterans currently blocked by a single senator

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, spoke on the Senate floor today calling for immediate passage of S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009. This bill merges two omnibus veterans' health bills which passed the Committee with unanimous bipartisan support, but which have been blocked by a lone Senator. Committee Members Jon Tester (D-MT) and Mark Begich (D-AK) also delivered floor speeches today calling for the passage of this vital legislation.

<More at: [http://veterans.senate.gov/press-releases.cfm?action=release.display&release\\_id=b435d7c9-f4af-4bc2-b94f-eb50697bab6c](http://veterans.senate.gov/press-releases.cfm?action=release.display&release_id=b435d7c9-f4af-4bc2-b94f-eb50697bab6c)>

## **TOO BAD WE VETERANS AREN'T BANKERS, HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDERS, OR CAR MANUFACTURERS**

### **SEN. BLOCKING BILL: OBJECTION IS COST, NOT VETS**

Rick Maze - Staff writer - Nov 5, 2009

The senator holding up consideration of an omnibus veterans' health bill doesn't hate veterans and their families, but he does hate the idea of creating new benefits without paying for them, his spokesman says.

Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., is using Senate rules to block a vote on S 1963, a major veterans bill, unless he has the chance to offer amendments to pay for the new benefits it creates, especially stipends, health benefits, counseling and other programs aimed at family caregivers of seriously wounded combat veterans.

<More at: [http://www.navytimes.com/news/2009/11/military\\_coburnhold\\_veteransbill\\_110409w/](http://www.navytimes.com/news/2009/11/military_coburnhold_veteransbill_110409w/)>

### **COLORADO OFFERS SPECIAL BENEFITS TO VETERANS**

Richard Schleeter - October 25, 2009

The state of Colorado offers special benefits for its military service members and veterans, including Retired Military Tax Exemptions, state employment preferences, education and tuition assistance, vehicle tags and license plates and hunting and fishing license privileges, as well as state veterans nursing homes.

Eligibility for some of these benefits may depend on residency, military component and the veteran's disability status. To find out more about state benefits check with your local Veterans Service officer or [click here](#).

### **NO PAY, NO DEPLOYMENT, IOWA REPS SAY**

McClatchy-Tribune Information Services - October 30, 2009

Members of the Iowa National Guard who are owed up to \$200 a day because of an extended deployment should get reimbursed before being deployed again, members of the Iowa congressional delegation said Thursday. A bill to ensure that nearly 20,000 National Guard members nationwide get benefits promised under a program commonly known as "respite leave" has been signed into law by President Barack Obama.

<More at: <http://www.military.com/news/article/no-pay-no-deployment-iowa-reps-say.html>>

## **RETREAT – NEWS**

### **FIRST LADY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR VETERANS IN NYC**

Dave Sheinin - Washington Post Staff Writer - October 28, 2009

NEW YORK -- At the center of an auditorium in the uppermost reaches of New York City was a throng of people, and at the center of the throng was Michelle Obama

... About six hours before the first pitch of the World Series would be thrown at Yankee Stadium, Obama and Jill Biden, wife of the vice president, took part in Major League Baseball's new Welcome Back Veterans campaign, being promoted during the championship series between the New York Yankees and the Philadelphia Phillies.

They entered the auditorium at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx to a standing ovation from the audience of veterans, patients and hospital staffers.

"We owe [veterans] for what they've done for us," Obama said, speaking over the heads of the crowd to the television cameras. "Let's be more aware of these heroes in our midst."

<More at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/28/AR2009102803251.html>

### **GAME DEVELOPER'S NEWEST 'CALL OF DUTY': HELP VETS FIND JOBS**

Ed O'Keefe - Washington Post Staff Writer - November 9, 2009

A video game company is donating \$1 million on Tuesday to set up a foundation to help veterans find employment, organizers announced.

Activision Blizzard, which produces the popular Guitar Hero and Tony Hawk franchises, said its Call of Duty Endowment (CODE) will support other groups that assist veterans with their careers.

Unemployment may have hit double digits in the nation last week, but for veterans, finding a job has always had its challenges. The unemployment rate among people who served in the military since 2001 was 11.6 percent in October, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <More at: <http://community.washingtonpost.com/ver1.0/Direct/Process>>

## **OBAMA LEANING TOWARD 34,000 MORE TROOPS FOR AFGHANISTAN**

Jonathan S. Landay, John Walcott and Nancy A. Youssef - McClatchy Newspapers - Nov. 08, 2009

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is nearing a decision to send more than 30,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan next year, but he may not announce it until after he consults with key allies and completes a trip to Asia later this month, administration and military officials have told McClatchy.

As it now stands, the administration's plan calls for sending three Army brigades from the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky. and the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y. and a Marine brigade, for a total of as many as 23,000 additional combat and support troops.

Another 7,000 troops would man and support a new division headquarters for the international force's Regional Command (RC) South in Kandahar, the Taliban birthplace where the U.S. is due to take command in 2010. Some 4,000 additional U.S. trainers are likely to be sent as well, the officials said. <More at: <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/251/story/78516.html>>

## **ARMORED TROOP CARRIERS CALLED UNSAFE FOR DUTY**

Sara A. Carter - November 5, 2009

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan | Staff Sgt. Daniel Paul Rabidou nervously rubbed the sweat from his palms onto his Army fatigues. The tall, well-built 24-year-old from San Bernardino, Calif., had already survived two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on convoys in the past six weeks, including one on the same road he was getting ready to traverse again from Forward Operating Base Ramrod near Kandahar to a small outpost in the heart of Taliban territory.

Since they arrived at the outpost on Sept. 13, the Blackwatch unit - Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, with the 5th Stryker Brigade - had lost three soldiers and two civil affairs officers. IEDs had destroyed three of their four Stryker vehicles. Overall, 21 of 350 Strykers have been destroyed since the 5th Brigade deployed in southern Afghanistan in July; more than two dozen Americans have been killed and nearly 70 wounded. Soldiers call the Strykers "Kevlar coffins," Sgt. Rabidou said. <More at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/nov/05/armored-troop-carriers-unsafe-for-afghan-duty/>>

## **RARE VIRUS POSES NEW THREAT TO TROOPS**

Sara A. Carter - November 6, 2009

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan | U.S. military officials sent a medical team to a remote outpost in southern Afghanistan this week to take blood samples from members of an Army unit after a soldier in the unit died from an Ebola-like virus.

Dr. Jim Radike, an expert in internal medicine and infectious diseases at the Role 3 Trauma Hospital at Kandahar Air Field, told The Washington Times that Sgt. Robert David Gordon, 22, from River Falls, Ala., died Sept. 16 from what turned out to be Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever after he was bitten by a tick. The virus is transmitted by infected blood and can be carried by ticks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

<More at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/nov/06/rare-virus-poses-new-threat-to-troops/>>

## **75 PERCENT OF YOUNG AMERICANS ARE UNFIT FOR MILITARY DUTY**

3 November 2009

WASHINGTON -- Are America's youth too fat, dumb or dishonest to defend the nation against its enemies? The latest Army statistics show a stunning 75 percent of military-age youth are ineligible to join the military because they are overweight, can't pass entrance exams, have dropped out of high school or had run-ins with the law.

So many young people between the prime recruiting ages of 17 and 24 cannot meet minimum standards that a group of retired military leaders is calling for more investment in early childhood education to combat the insidious effects of junk food and inadequate education.

"We've never had this problem of young people being obese like we have today," said Gen. John Shalikashvili, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He calls the rising number of youth unfit for duty a matter of national security. "We should be concerned about how this will impact this overstretched Army and its ability to recruit."

<More at: <http://www.sphere.com/2009/11/03/70-percent-of-young-americans-are-unfit-for-military-duty/>>

## **FRENCH FAMILIES SUE COMMANDERS WHO ATE VIP DINNER AS SOLDIERS DIED IN AMBUSH**

Adam Sage in Paris - October 30, 2009

Relatives of French soldiers killed in an ambush in Afghanistan are to file a criminal lawsuit alleging that officers placed their troops' lives at risk through a series of blunders. Families of at least four of the ten men who died in the battle last year have said that they are planning legal action. They claim that commanding officers neglected essential security procedures, and that as the ambush took place they were dining with guests at a presentation for VIPs in Kabul.

<More at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6896261.ece?&EMC-Bln=OIWFOB>>

## **MORALE DIPS FOR AMERICAN MARINES IN AFGHANISTAN**

Stephen Grey in Khan Neshin - The Sunday Times - October 25, 2009

A mile from South Station, an outpost of US marines in Helmand province, the tribal chief was openly hostile. "The Americans threaten our economy and take our land for bases. They promise much and deliver nothing," he said.

"People here regard the American troops as occupiers," said Haji Khan, a leader of the Baluch tribe, who rules like a medieval baron. "Young people are turning against them and in time will fight them."

Inside South Station, soldiers are proud of the progress they have made. Until they arrived, this remote part of Helmand had not had a government presence for years. But many are pessimistic about where the conflict is heading.

"I'm not much for this war. I'm not sure it's worth all those lives lost," said Sergeant Christian Richardson as we walked across corn fields that will soon be ploughed up to plant a spring crop of opium poppy.

A New Yorker who joined the marines after 9/11 and served two tours in Iraq, Richardson, 24, said his men had achieved much. "You can see we are making progress, slowly. But when we leave, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda will surely return."

<More at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/Afghanistan/article6888996.ece>>

## **IS THE MILITARY IGNORING ITS HEROIN PROBLEM IN THE RANKS?**

Megan Carpentier, Air America Media October 22, 2009

The U.S. military has known about the problem of drug use in its ranks since the Vietnam War, when contemporaneous accounts suggested up to 15 percent of enlisted men tried or became addicted to opiates. But, for the first time since then, the military has soldiers in combat in a producer-country: Afghanistan, which produces more than 90 percent of the world's heroin despite decades of eradication efforts.

For many soldiers bored or traumatized, the access to cheap, strong heroin is likely to be a powerful lure and, in fact, [reports going back to 2006](#) show that heroin can be easily--and cheaply--obtained mere steps off Bagram Air Base. Shaun McCanna, reporting for Salon in 2007, was able to arrange to receive heroin worth hundreds of dollars in the U.S. for \$30 in the Bagram Bazaar multiple times. <More at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/143447/>>

## **'UNDEPLOYABLES' SENT TO THE AFGHAN FRONT**

Dahr Jamail and Sarah Lazare - Nov 10, 2009

As the Barack Obama administration debates whether to send tens of thousands of extra troops to Afghanistan, an already overstretched military is increasingly struggling to meet its deployment numbers. Surprisingly, one place it seems to be targeting is military personnel who go absent without leave (AWOL) and then are caught or turn themselves in.

Hidden behind the gates of military bases across the United States troops facing AWOL and desertion charges regularly find themselves in the hands of a military that metes out informal, open-ended punishments by forcing them to wait months - sometimes more than a year - to face military justice. In the meantime, some of these soldiers are offered a free pass out of this legal limbo as long as they agree to deploy to Afghanistan or Iraq - even if they have been diagnosed with severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). <More at: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/KK10Df08.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/KK10Df08.html)>

## **RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST GROUP ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY?**

Rob Waters - Southern Poverty Law Center - October 26, 2009

Oath Keepers, the militia/"Patriot" extremist group made up of law enforcement officers, military personnel and veterans, has posted a photo on its site showing (it says) "an active duty Oath Keeper in Mosul, Iraq" wearing two Velcro-attached "tabs" or patches, one saying "Oath Keeper" and the other "Three percent." The flag patch beneath them is also an insignia of the "Three Percenters," an informal alliance of hard-line gun owners. <More at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/143500/>>

## TO THE COLORS - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Notes
11/10		Mankato, MN	Resource Fair	Sue Sorenson	507-345-8258
11/11-11/15		The Medford Area Middle School Medford, WI	The Wall That Heals	The Medford Area Middle School	
11/11		Scottish Rite Event Center 1895 Camino del Rio South San Diego, CA	Military Career Expo Memorial Hiring Event		<a href="#">Register</a>
11/13-11/15		Huntsville, AL	Stand Down	<a href="#">Sandra Childress</a>	256-684-6251
11/13		Kansas City, KS	Resource Fair	<a href="#">John Brown</a>	816-753-1866
11/19		Shreveport, LA	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Carolyn Green</a>	318-490-4404
11/19		Hilton Conference Center 1800 Highway 26 East Grapevine, TX	Southwest Regional Career Event		<a href="#">Register</a>
11/19		Mobile, AL	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Kelly Estle, MSW</a>	251-219-3971
11/21		Homosassa, FL	Resource Fair	<a href="#">John E. Young</a>	352-628-4083
12/3		Location TBD Colorado Springs, CO	Mountain Region Hiring Event		<a href="#">Register</a>
12/10		Location TBD Atlanta, GA	Southeast Regional Event		<a href="#">Register</a>

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

## TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

### **END OF RULE ALLOWING EXPULSION OF GRIEVING SPOUSES**

The Associated Press - October 28, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) -- President Barack Obama has signed into law a bill that ends a rule that made newly married foreigners subject to expulsion if their American spouses died within two years of marriage and before their applications for permanent residency had been approved. >More at: [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2010155230\\_apuswidowspenalty.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2010155230_apuswidowspenalty.html)>

### **MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS MAY RAISE RISK OF MILITARY SPOUSE SUICIDE**

Stacy Bannerman - truthout Report - 24 October 2009

Although the mental health of service members is a growing public concern, the psychological needs of military spouses are being neglected. As the effects of eight years of war accumulate in Army families, a growing number of military spouses suffering stress, depression and thoughts of suicide can't get the care they need. There is "a severe shortage of mental-health-care facilities for families, both on post and off, especially as post-behavioral health centers are already filled to capacity with soldiers," according to Army psychiatrist Col. Kris Peterson. (Army News Service, October 13, 2009)

The Army has been closely tracking the uptick in mental health problems of soldiers, and is collaborating with the National Institute of Mental Health on "the largest study ever of suicide and mental health in the military." ("[Study to Seek Clues to Soldier Suicides](#)." The Washington Post, August 10, 2009) Military family members aren't included in the study, which was announced in July, the same month that two spouses of multiply-deployed husbands were reported dead of suspected self-inflicted injuries. <More at: <http://www.truthout.org/article/multiple-deployments-may-raise-risk-military-spouse-suicide>>

Stacey Bannerman is the author of one of our recommended reads at <http://www.vuft.org/ReadingList.htm>

### **THE WAR CONDOLENCES OBAMA HASN'T SENT**

Amy Goodman – Oct 27, 2009

U.S. Army Reserve Spc. Chancellor Keesling died in Iraq on June 19, 2009, from "a non-combat related incident," according to the Pentagon. Keesling had killed himself. He was just one in what is turning out to be a record year for suicides in the U.S. military. In August, President Barack Obama addressed the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention, saying, "[T]here is nothing

more sobering than signing a letter of condolence to the family of [a] serviceman or -woman who has given their life for our country." To their surprise, Jannett and Gregg Keesling, Chance's parents, won't be getting such a letter. Obama does not write condolence letters to loved ones of those who commit suicide in the theater of combat. [After making inquiries, the Keeslings discovered that this was not because of an oversight. Instead, it's because of a longstanding U.S. policy to deny presidential condolence letters to the families of soldiers who take their own lives.]

<More at: [http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/20091027\\_the\\_war\\_condolences\\_obama\\_hasnt\\_sent/](http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/20091027_the_war_condolences_obama_hasnt_sent/)>

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SCARS OF WAR AFFECT MORE WOMEN THAN EVER**

Damien Cave - New York Times News Service - Nov. 01, 2009

For Vivienne Pacquette, being a combat veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder means avoiding phone calls to her sons, dinner out with her husband and therapy sessions that make her talk about seeing her wounded friends after a mortar attack in 2004. As with other women in her position, hiding seems to make sense. Post-traumatic stress disorder distorts personalities: some veterans who have it fight in their sleep; others feel paranoid around children. And as women return to a society unfamiliar with their wartime roles, they often choose isolation over embarrassment.

Many spend months or years as virtual shut-ins, missing the camaraderie of Iraq or Afghanistan, while racked with guilt over who they have become. <More at: <http://www.kentucky.com/216/story/1001183.html>>

### **AT WALTER REED, A PALPABLE STRAIN ON MENTAL-HEALTH SYSTEM**

Anne Hull and Dana Priest - November 7, 2009

The instructions were simple: Talk about your feelings on the morning after learning that an Army major in Texas was believed to have gunned down 13 people and wounded another 38 at Fort Hood. But here at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in a group-therapy session for combat-stressed soldiers in the hospital's outpatient psychiatry unit, frustrations soon boiled over and Pfc. Sophia Taylor was out the door.

"You people don't listen," the Iraqi war vet said, as two clinicians followed her down the hall to the elevators.

"Sophia," one of them said. Taylor was trembling and wiping tears from her face. "Stop talking to me," she said. "This ward ain't gonna change until everyone else in the freakin' Army dies. You people don't listen to me. I'm tired of talking."

This scene at Walter Reed on Friday underscores the ongoing tensions, frustrations and problems in the military health-care system for troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with psychiatric problems.

<More at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/06/AR2009110604352.html>>

### **PRESSED BY WARS, MILITARY COUNSELORS FEELING THE STRAIN**

Benedict Carey and Damien Cave - New York Times - November 8, 2009

NEW YORK - Many of the patients who fill the day are bereft, angry, broken. Their stories are gruesome, their distress lasting, and the process of recovery exhausting. In time the repeated stories of battle and loss can leave even the most professional therapist numb or angry. And hanging over it all, for psychiatrists and psychologists in today's military, is the prospect of their own deployment - of working under fire with combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

That was the world that Major Nidal Malik Hasan, an Army psychiatrist, inhabited until Thursday, when he was accused of one of the worst mass shootings ever on a military base in the United States, an attack that killed 13 and left dozens wounded. Five of the dead were fellow therapists, the Army said.

<More at: [http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/11/08/burdened\\_by\\_wars\\_military\\_counselors\\_face\\_an\\_overload\\_of\\_cases/](http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/11/08/burdened_by_wars_military_counselors_face_an_overload_of_cases/)>

### **ARMY STRUGGLES TO EASE STRAIN ON TROOPS**

Nancy Montgomery - Stars and Stripes European edition - November 7, 2009

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Hiring more mental health counselors, asking soldiers to keep tabs on each other's mental health and working to remove the stigma of getting psychological help are all well and good. But the single most important thing the Army could do to relieve stress on Army troops and reduce the number of suicides, the Army's top enlisted leader said Friday, is to give troops a chance to just slow down.

Increasing "dwell time" — the amount of time soldiers have at home between combat deployments — would prevent some problems, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston said. "A dwell time increase — it allows a unit to slow down, get back to normality" he said. "It affects not only the soldier and family and stability," he said, it would also slow down the current, rushed tempo of deployment, coming home, going to a new post, becoming part of a new unit and deploying again. <More at: <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=65921>>

## **SCANS SHOW INVISIBLE DAMAGE TO VETERANS' BRAINS**

The Associated Press - Nov . 9, 2009

WASHINGTON - Powerful scans are letting doctors watch just how the brain changes in veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and concussion-like brain injuries — signature damage of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. It's work that one day may allow far easier diagnosis for patients — civilian or military — who today struggle to get help for these largely invisible disorders. For now it brings a powerful message: Problems too often shrugged off as "just in your head" in fact do have physical signs, now that scientists are learning where and how to look for them.

<More at: [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33802142/ns/health-more\\_health\\_news/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33802142/ns/health-more_health_news/)>

## **SPINAL INJURIES UP AMONG TROOPS**

Gregg Zoroya - USA TODAY

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Afghan insurgents are using roadside bombs powerful enough to throw the military's new 14-ton, blast-resistant vehicles into the air, increasing broken-back injuries among U.S. troops.

Doctors at the U.S. military hospital here say more than 100 U.S. servicemembers have suffered crushed or damaged spinal columns from being thrown around inside armored Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles in the last five months.

This "significant increase" in spinal injuries was not seen in the Iraq war, says Air Force Col. Warren Dorlac, director of trauma care for both conflicts. One in five wounded service members evacuated from Afghanistan this summer and early fall suffered a spinal injury and at least 14 were left paralyzed or with loss of sensation, says Air Force Lt. Col. Dustin Zierold, a surgeon and the hospital's director of trauma care.

"Whatever the G-force (of the roadside bombs), it is very high and very destructive," Zierold says.

## **OFF-LABEL USE OF PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS COMMON FOR VETERANS**

Jennifer Gibson, PharmD - October 13, 2009

Men and women of the United States military are suffering from mental illnesses at an increasing rate. Among service members involved in the on-going conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, recent research found that nearly two-thirds displayed signs or symptoms of mental illness, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, or substance or alcohol abuse. Treating veterans with mental illness is an important task of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system, but a new study reports that off-label use of psychiatric medications is near 60%, prompting concerns about the appropriate use of medication and optimal provision of mental health services.

<More at: <http://brainblogger.com/2009/10/13/off-label-use-of-psychiatric-medications-common-for-veterans/>>

## **CLICK THROUGH AND READ THIS INFORMATIVE ARTICLE**

## **DAILY MYTHBUSTER: HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM AND VETERANS**

Congressional Desk - November 04, 2009

*MYTH: Reform Will Undermine the Health Care That Veterans and Military Families Have Now*

Health insurance reform opponents continue to spread myths – now about the recently introduced Affordable Health Care for America Act, including saying that health insurance reform will undermine the health care that veterans and military families have now. But the facts continue to knock these myths down. <More at: <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/126984>>

## **TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS**

## **NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACTIVATED AS OF NOVEMBER 3, 2009**

This week the Air Force announced an increase in activated reservists, while the Army Navy and Marine Corps announced a decrease. The Coast Guard number remained unchanged. The net collective result is 206 fewer reservists activated than last week. At any given time, services may activate some units and individuals while deactivating others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 107,982; Navy Reserve, 6,378; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 13,393; Marine Corps Reserve, 8,065; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 683. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 136,501, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated may be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2009/d20091104nrg.pdf>.

## OIF/OEF – HACK DATE TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2009

### OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2,427 DAYS)

KILLED US	4,362
WOUNDED US [10/31/09]	31,557
OTHER US CASUALTIES [10/31/09]	≥39,232
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [10/31/09]	196
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1
KILLED UK	179
KILLED OTHER COALITION	139
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	1,819
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [11/9/08]	1,182
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY [1/25/09]	≥ 48,874
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS [11/10/09]	≥ 102,465 – 1,339,771
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS [11/9/08]	≥ 400K – 1.374M
IRAQ REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	2.1M/2.5M

### OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2,956 DAYS)

KILLED US	906
WOUNDED US [10/31/09]	4,434
OTHER CASUALTIES US [10/31/09]	8,983
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [10/31/09]	35
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1
KILLED COALITION	597
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2/07)	1,602
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY [7/4/09]	≥ 11,152
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (7/4/2009)	≥ 7,589
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (2/24/2009)	46,322
AFGHAN REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	1.75M/4.8M
COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE	\$698,938,204,056
COST OF AFGHAN WAR TO DATE	\$231,243,035,782

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**

### **A SUGGESTION FROM SOMEONE WHO REALLY CARES ABOUT VETERANS**

... here's a suggestion. In a week or so, when the president announces he is escalating the war, let's not hide the reality behind eloquence or animation. No more soaring rhetoric, please. No more video games. If our governing class wants more war, let's not allow them to fight it with young men and women who sign up because they don't have jobs here at home, or can't afford college or health care for their families.

Let's share the sacrifice. Spread the suffering. Let's bring back the draft.

Yes, bring back the draft -- for as long as it takes our politicians and pundits to "fix" Afghanistan to their satisfaction.

Bring back the draft, and then watch them dive for cover on Capitol Hill, in the watering holes and think tanks of the Beltway, and in the quiet little offices where editorial writers spin clever phrases justifying other people's sacrifice.

Let's insist our governing class show the courage to make this long and dirty war our war, or the guts to end it.

Bill Moyers

### **LONG-DELAYED SILVER STAR TO BE AWARDED**

Andrea Billups - October 28, 2009

It wasn't American soldiers that Capt. Jack Nicholson went to rescue one night in December 1963. But it didn't matter to him that they were his Vietnamese allies.

Growing up dirt poor as one of seven children on a farm in rural Iowa, he had learned to look out for more than his kin. As far as Capt. Nicholson was concerned, any comrade in the fight against communism was worth risking his life for.

"I felt like what I was doing there was very important for our country, for the South Vietnamese people, and for the world because we were trying to deter the expansion of communism - a heartless, joyless, phony form of government," the 75-year-old retired brigadier general recalls with the gruffness of a battle-worn commander.

And on Wednesday morning at Fort Myer, the Army will give the Iowa farm boy a long-delayed Silver Star in recognition of the 13 lives he saved on that moonless evening in the Mekong Delta.

<More at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/oct/28/long-delayed-silver-star-to-be-awarded/>>

## **A POWERFUL TAKE ON THE SUBJECT**

## THE FOREVER WAR OF THE MIND

Max Cleland - November 6, 2009

"EVERY day I was in Vietnam, I thought about home. And, every day I've been home, I've thought about Vietnam." So said one of the millions of soldiers who fought there as I did. Change the name of the battlefield and it could have been said by one of the American servicemen coming home from Iraq or Afghanistan today. Wars are not over when the shooting stops. They live on in the lives of those who fight them. That is the curse of the soldier. He never forgets.

While the authorities say they cannot yet tell us why an Army psychiatrist would go on a shooting rampage at Fort Hood in Texas, we do know the sorts of stories he had been dealing with as he tried to help those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan readjust to life outside the war zone. A soldier's mind can be just as dangerous to himself, and to those around him, as wars fought on traditional battlefields.

War is haunting. Death. Pain. Blood. Dismemberment. A buddy dying in your arms. Imagine trying to get over the memory of a bomb splitting a Humvee apart beneath your feet and taking your leg with it. The first time I saw the stilled bodies of American soldiers dead on the battlefield is as stark and brutal a memory as the one of the grenade that ripped off my right arm and both legs.

No, the soldier never forgets. But neither should the rest of us.

Veterans returning today represent the first real influx of combat-wounded soldiers in a generation. They are returning to a nation unprepared for what war does to the soul. Those new veterans will need all of our help. After America's wars, the used-up fighters are too often left to fend for themselves. Many of the hoboes in the Depression were veterans of World War I. When they came home, they were labeled shell-shocked and discharged from the Army too broken to make it during the economic cataclysm.

So it is again, with too many stories about veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan ending up unemployed and homeless. Figures from the Department of Veterans Affairs show that 131,000 of the nation's 24 million veterans are homeless each night, and about twice that many will spend part of this year homeless.

We know of the recent failures at Walter Reed Medical Center, where soldiers were stranded in substandard barracks infested with rats while awaiting treatment. I was in Walter Reed myself at that time seeking counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder, which, ignited by a barrage of Iraq headlines and the loss of my United States Senate seat, had simply consumed me.

I never saw it coming. Forty years after I had left the battlefield, my memories of death and wounding were suddenly as fresh and present as they had been in 1968. <More at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/07/opinion/07cleland.html>>

### **ADD-ON ~ STUFF OF INTEREST**

#### **VETERANS DISCOUNTS AND DEALS FROM SOME MAJOR US COMPANIES**

**Applebees**: Free entree (5 to choose from) at participating stores during business hours on Tuesday, November 11, 2008 with active/reserve/retired ID card.

**McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurants**: To the Veterans who have served in war and peace, we honor you Sunday, November 8th with a complimentary entree from a special menu. Please present proper authentication when you visit the restaurant. ID includes VA card, VFW card, American Legion card, discharge papers, DD214 or other veteran's ID. *[Over but a great thought nonetheless]*

**Golden Corral**: The 2008 Military Appreciation Monday dinner will be held on Monday, November 16, 2008 from 5 pm to 9 pm in all Golden Corral Restaurants. The free "thank you" dinner is available to any person who has ever served in the United States Military. If you are a veteran, retired, currently serving, in the National Guard or Reserves, you are invited to participate in Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Monday dinner.

**Famous Dave's BBQ Restaurants** – free meal for active and vets

**Outback Steakhouses** - free "Bloomin' Onion" for active and vets

**Knotts Berry Farm Free Admission**. November 1 – 27 November (Thanksgiving Day) Knott's annual tribute to our Military, past and present. Veterans or current serving military personnel plus one guest get in FREE with proper ID

presented at Knott's turnstile (DD214, Veterans Administration Hospital ID or Active Military Service ID). Purchase up to six additional tickets for just \$15 each.

**Sports Authority** – 15% discount for active and vets

Lowe's: Lowe's Companies, Inc. will offer all active, reserve, honorably discharged, retired military personnel and their immediate family members a 10 percent discount on in-store U.S. purchases made during the Veterans Day holiday. The discount is available Nov. 6 – Nov. 11. The discount is available on in-stock and special order purchases up to \$5,000. To qualify, individuals must present a valid military ID or other proof of service. Excluded from the discount are sales via [Lowes.com](http://Lowes.com), previous sales, and purchases of services or gift cards.

**Home Depot**: The Home Depot(R) is offering all active duty personnel, reservists, retired military, veterans and their families a 10 percent discount off their purchases in honor of Veteran.s Day. The offer is valid on purchases of up to \$2,000 for a maximum of \$200 between November 6 and November 12, 2008, at The Home Depot stores, The Home Depot Design Center locations, Yardbirds and EXPO Design Center(R) locations.

**Free Disney**:

Disney recently announced a new program honoring the US military- "Disney's Armed Forces Salute." This program offers active duty military members, retirees, active US Coast Guard, and activated National Guard and Reserves members are eligible to receive a complimentary 3 day admission ticket to any Disney theme park located in the US. Disney is also offering special rates on their Disneyland and Disney World Resort hotels.

Bring your friends! Eligible members can also purchase discounted tickets for family members and friends.

Free 5-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket which includes admission to all Disney World theme parks, including the water parks and DisneyQuest. Eligible military members can purchase discounted Disney tickets for their friends and family - adult or child 5-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion" ticket for up to 5 people for \$99 per ticket (add \$25 for access to all parks). A limited number of discounted Disney Resort hotel tickets are available. Expires: December 23, 2009.

**Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks**:

Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks is offering military members a similar deal, with their Salute to Heroes 2009 program. Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks include Sea World, Busch Gardens, Sesame Place, Sea World, and Water Country USA. Free Admission to Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks for military members. Here are the key details for free tickets: Complimentary admission for active duty military representing all five service branches, active members of a reserve or National Guard unit, and/or up to three direct dependents. Offer valid through 12/31/2009. Operating days and hours vary by park. Please check with specific park for current operating schedule. Valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one of the following Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks:

- SeaWorld Orlando, San Diego, or San Antonio
- Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg
- Sesame Place
- Adventure Island
- Water Country USA

How to get your free tickets to Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks You will need to visit the official Salute to Heroes website and fill out the applications form. You will need to fill out the application and send it in, or you can fill out a registration form at Guest Relations at the park.

**MILITARYCONNECTION.COM**

Military Jobs & Federal Government Jobs Employment Opportunities, Schools for Veterans, New GI Bill Resources and Military Loans ~ <http://www.militaryconnection.com/index.asp>

**NO NEWSLETTER 25 NOVEMBER**

**I WILL BE ON THE ROAD FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH. THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE ON 10 DECEMBER. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

## 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](mailto: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

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