

# SOUND OFF!



VOL. V, NO 13

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

*“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”*

20 APRIL 2010

## FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

### GRAND THEFT OF LIVES & TREASURE

#### Larceny from the top

Something has happened that I don't quite understand.

Our nation that historically has lionized the good, the honest, the loyal, and the brave now worships at the feet of the greedy and the rapacious.

John Wayne isn't our hero anymore, some thieving Wall St. gambler is.

Maybe we get what we deserve, or deserve what we get, depending on your point of view.

People put their money in banks, expecting it to be safer than hoarding it under the mattress, and the banks then gamble with their money, and when they lose, the government steps in and covers the loss. Then the depositors rise up and curse the government as the bad guy. Is it any wonder I am confused?

Young men and women struggle against a prolonged unemployment rate of 9% plus (over 12% in California and over 14% in Michigan), then desperate for employment of some kind, enlist in the armed Forces for poverty-rate pay. Then they are mocked as losers by their peers, and virtually ignored by their elders. Everyone weeps, briefly, when they die but quickly and conveniently forgets them when they live and are wounded in body or mind.

The heroes are the “captains of industry and finance”, who send our jobs overseas and are praised as excellent “cost-cutters”. They lay off workers, demand exceptional efforts from the remaining force and get bonuses for improving “productivity”.

Most ordinary soldiers pay little income tax, although they pay employment tax just like most other workers. Those who are comfortable in their

employment and their wealth then deride those who don't pay income taxes as freeloaders. Glenn Beck says the freeloaders ought to be the ones fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan (presumably so the wealthy taxpayers and their kids don't have to, as if they would). Guess what Glenn? Those whom you define as “freeloaders” ARE the ones bearing the burden for this nation in our two wars – THEY are the one's who's life an treasure your kind are stealing.

The 25 hedge fund managers who earned \$1 Billion (yes, that's with a “B”) each this last year, are not the “freeloaders” – they are the new “heroes”. These are the folks that many Americans want their kids to be like – “Get an MBA, find a way to game the system, make an obscene amount of money that is completely unrelated to the worth you provide the nation, and you'll be successful, my son/daughter.”

That \$1 Billion would pay the annual salaries of 25,000 Staff Sergeants and Petty Officers 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

[How does one spend almost \$2,900 a minute for every waking moment of a year? That's the same pay that a Staff Sergeant with over 8 years of service makes in a month: I'm sure the Staff Sergeant doesn't have any trouble figuring out how to spend it – it's called survival.]

The \$143 Billion that the financial industry earned in bonuses last year would go a long way toward closing the shortfalls in VA care, Medicare, Social Security, and the new Healthcare bill, wouldn't it? After all they made all that “profit” and all those bonuses using our tax dollars, so fork it over!

The investment bankers are “being rewarded for their business acumen and profit-making ability”, I guess, while the soldiers are being punished for their

inability or unwillingness to steal enough money to make a difference. At least it all fits the robber baron's perennial philosophy that those who are wealthy are wealthy because they deserve it, and those who are poor are likewise poor because they deserve it. Andrew Jackson had to deal with that world view, as did Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. They won for awhile, but the barons always resurge.

I am not a communist, and I don't believe in wholesale redistribution of wealth, but I do believe in fair distribution of wealth to start with – then true worth and energy can be rewarded and redistribution isn't even necessary.

Why do soldiers who fight the wars that the bankers and their political proxies start get paid less annually than what the bankers spend on a night out on the town? For that matter, why do tradesmen, teachers, and nurses and so many others who work hard for us every day get one-thousandth of what the chairman of Goldman Sachs or CBS or GE makes? What do those financial, industrial and entertainment "heroes" do for all of us that warrant that differential to start with?

I know what the soldiers and teachers and nurses do, and it is not only valuable but also is essential to our nation's health and growth. I know that we would miss 1,000 of them far more than I would miss one of those CEOs.

Someone who is no smarter than you or I makes 1,000 times what you or I make. We all operate in the same system – how can we not believe that somehow he is getting more out of the system than we are? And, if he's getting more, shouldn't he pay more?

If the tax rates were as they were during Eisenhower's presidency, then that hedge fund manager would be paying \$910 Million in taxes, not \$150 Million. We could understand that, couldn't we? He got more – he should pay more. A few might worry about how the poor fellow was going to get on with only \$90 Million a year, but not too many, I imagine.

Even if I am Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff making \$180,000 a year, I pay taxes on everything I earn at the highest tax rate. Why does this new "hero" pay a lower rate on his un-earned income (i.e., as investment profit not wages), than I do on my earned income (i.e. the bucks I work 24/7 to earn)?

Well, talking about it here doesn't relieve my confusion, but maybe it has heightened yours, and that's OK. We all must question a system that turns history and our view of ourselves as a nation on its ear.

### Larceny from the bottom

There is another type of larceny going on that I am afraid I understand all too well. We have talked about it before.

There are charities out there which are running enormous scams claiming to be supporting veterans, and siphoning off millions of dollars that should be going to veterans.

Last year I cited the "charity" "**Help Hospitalized Veterans**". Roger Chapin, its founder, took almost \$300K in salary, as did his Executive Director. They raised about \$40M but only about half of that was spent on "Program Expenses", mostly for model kits, and questions have been raised about those expenses. (\$20M worth of \$15 model kits should have swamped our VA hospitals.) They get a "0" rating on a scale of "0 – 4" from **Charity Navigator**, with "4" being excellent.

Now we have a new one – "**The U.S. Navy Veterans Association**". They have been ordered to stop fundraising in New Mexico by the Attorney General of that state.

USNVA claims 41 chapters and 66,000 members. Many of the chapters are listed under the charity listing **Guidestar**, but anyone can list there who has a charity designation from the IRS. They are not listed on Charity Navigator and they have been directed to stop claiming that they are recipients of the **Guidestar** "Exchange Seal", but they still claim it.

Most of their chapters in the Guidestar listing, while listing a home address in the state for the chapter, list the identical PO Box at a UPS store in Washington DC for contributions. The honcho of this operation is "Commander" Bobby Thompson (the Navy has no record of him).

On their website they claim to be "A Nationally Recognized U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Service Organization". The VAs [list of recognized VSOs](#) does not list this organization.

Their website claims that they are "Nationally Recognized by the United States Department of Defense as a Valuable Veterans' Resource Organization" and they link to [that directory](#). They are not listed in the DoD's directory.

According to the Better Business Bureau, "This Charity does not meet one or more of the [standards for Charity Accountability](#)"

Of the 85 officers listed in the various chapters, only one can be found, not including "National

Chairman Jack Nimitz". When "Commander" Thompson was pursued by the press because of the New Mexico chapter shutdown he disappeared from his Ybor City, FL address and left no forwarding address.

USNVA has refused every direct request for its records, despite the requirements of both state and federal law to make these records available.

Millions of dollars collected and no record of where it went, although some is suspected of ending up in "Commander" Thompson's political PAC that he ran out of the same address and which he shut down quickly.

Please read:

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/military/veterans/new-mexico-to-nonprofit-navy-veterans-charity-with-fake-addresses-cease/1085467> for much more information.

At the end of this issue of "**SOUND OFF**", in the "Add-On section, we list a number of veterans'

charities from **Charity Navigator** along with their ratings. Please consider some of the three- and four-star charities there for your giving. When you find one,

encourage your friends and family to use the same charity and to avoid the scam artists.

These star ratings are not the only criterion by which you should judge charities (I give to a one-star charity myself). If, however, the charity soliciting you doesn't get very high up on this list, then you need to ask a lot more questions before you give them any of your cash.

It takes a real coward and thug to prey on people's sentiments about veterans in order to steal their money. Let's shut these low-level and low-life predators down.

#### **And who's in the middle?**

All of us who defend our country, raise our families, work hard at decent or not-so-decent paying jobs, save for our retirement, support our constitution, and pay our taxes, while giving to those who are more needy than we.

#### **For both kinds of thief:**

**"The right man, in the right place, at the right time, can steal millions."**

Gregory Nunn

[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

2/11/2008 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.

4/20/10 NTR [The courts move veeerrrry slowly]

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]**

No letters this issue

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

**HOUSE PASSES BILLS PACKAGE TO ELIMINATE HOMELESSNESS, PROVIDE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTECT HOME OWNERSHIP FOR VETERANS**

March 25, 2010

Washington, D.C. – House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) announced that the U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve seven measures this week that would improve benefits and services to veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

H.R. 4810 - End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010 (Filner)

H.R. 1879 - National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2009 (Coffman)

H.J.Res. 80 - Honoring the Blinded Veterans Association on its 65th anniversary (Halvorson)

H.R. 3976 - Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act of 2009 (Perriello)

H.R. 4667 - Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010 (Perriello)

H.R. 4592 – Energy Jobs for Veterans Act (Teague)

H.R. 4360 – Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center (Campbell)

“Over the last three years, Democrats increased the VA health care budget by 55%, instituted advance funding, provided a G.I. Bill for the 21st Century, revamped the VA home loan program, and expanded access to VA health care for more veterans,” said Chairman Filner. “During these tough economic times, we must do more. Today, the House committed to ending veteran homelessness, worked to provide employment protections and opportunities, and passed a bill to support veterans during reintegration by protecting homeownership following deployment. Congress continues to take bold action to support veterans.” The bills will next be heard in the U.S. Senate. <More at: [www.vawatchdog.org/10/hcva10/hcva032510-1.htm](http://www.vawatchdog.org/10/hcva10/hcva032510-1.htm)>

**OHIO [AND A CALIFORNIA] REP AIMS TO PROTECT MILITARY FAMILIES**

Craig Schulz April 17, 2010

An Ohio Congressman who successfully passed legislation in his home state protecting military families from hate protesters at the funerals of U.S. soldiers is pushing to make his law a national precedent. Representative John Boccieri (D-OH) and fellow military veteran Duncan Hunter (R-CA) have introduced a House resolution that urges the Supreme Court to rule in favor of military families seeking to restrict the First Amendment rights of protestors at military funerals.

Boccieri told Fox News on Saturday “As a military veteran and current reservist, we would fight over and over again for their right to spew their venom and their hate. But they have to do it at a respectful distance. The right to free speech ends where the privacy of a family mourning the loss of a service member begins.”

<More at: <http://liveshots.blogs.foxnews.com/2010/04/17/ohio-rep-aims-to-protect-military-families/>>

**NOTE: Congress is in Recess [although you may not have noticed]**



**YES, THERE ARE A FEW THIEVES AMONG US ALSO**

**FORMER U.S. ARMY RESERVE OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO ACCEPTING ILLEGAL GRATUITIES RELATED TO CONTRACTING WHEN SERVING AT CAMP ARIEFAN, KUWAIT**

WASHINGTON - PRNewswire-USNewswire - April 15 2010

A former captain in the U.S. Army Reserve pleaded guilty today to accepting thousands of dollars in gratuities from a contractor during his deployment to Kuwait, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division. Markus E. McClain, 31, of Brandon, Miss., pleaded guilty today before U.S. District Court Judge Reggie B. Walton in the District of Columbia to a criminal information charging him with accepting an illegal gratuity.

<More at: [www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/former-us-army-reserve-officer-pleads-guilty-to-accepting-illegal-gratuities-related-to-contracting-when-serving-at-camp-ariefan-kuwait-90953754.html](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/former-us-army-reserve-officer-pleads-guilty-to-accepting-illegal-gratuities-related-to-contracting-when-serving-at-camp-ariefan-kuwait-90953754.html)>

**WOMAN ADMITS STEALING \$11,250 THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO TO NEEDY VETERANS**

Bruce Cadwallader - The Columbus Dispatch - April 19, 2010

An East Side woman pleaded guilty today to stealing \$11,250 that was supposed to go to needy veterans.

Gloria J. Woodard, 43, of 2681 Old Forge Rd. is on administrative leave from her job with the Franklin County Veterans Services Commission. She will be sentenced May 27 in Common Pleas Court for a single count of theft in office and could be sent to prison for five years. <More at: [www.dispatch.com/live/content/local\\_news/stories/2010/04/19/admits-veterans-theft.html?sid=101](http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2010/04/19/admits-veterans-theft.html?sid=101)>

**JUST IN CASE YOU AREN'T PISSED OFF ENOUGH ALREADY!**

**DEAD MARINE'S FATHER MUST PAY PROTESTER**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - New York Times - March 29, 2010

Lawyers for the father of a Marine who died in Iraq say a court has ordered him to pay legal costs for the anti-gay protesters who picketed his son's funeral. The protesters are led by Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan. The father, Albert Snyder of York, Pa., had won a \$5 million verdict against Mr. Phelps, but it was thrown out on appeal. On Friday, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Maryland, ordered Mr. Snyder to pay the costs of Mr. Phelps's appeal. The United States Supreme Court agreed earlier this month to consider whether the protesters' provocative messages, which include phrases like "Thank God for dead soldiers," are protected by the First Amendment. Members of the church maintain that God hates homosexuality and that the death of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan is God's way of punishing the United States for its tolerance of it. [www.nytimes.com/2010/03/30/us/30brfs-DEADMARINESF\\_BRF.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/30/us/30brfs-DEADMARINESF_BRF.html)

**FAMILIES OF DEAD CONTRACTORS SUE FEDS**

Associated Press - March 27, 2010

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The families of three private security contractors who were kidnapped, held for ransom and beheaded in Iraq are suing U.S. State Department over their deaths.

Joshua Munns, John Cote and John Young were working for Crescent Security Group in November 2006 when they and two other co-workers were ambushed and abducted while guarding a military convoy near the southern Iraq city of Safwan.

The complaint, which filed Monday in U.S. District Court in Sacramento, seeks punitive damages and challenges the constitutionality of the U.S. government's practice of using private military contractors in war but not supporting them when they are injured, killed or kidnapped.

"The primary goal is to peel back the lid on this black box .... to ask the hard question about what this 'War on Terror' is about," Bill Palmer, an attorney for the plaintiffs, told The Associated Press.

<More at: [www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2010/03/ap\\_military\\_contractors\\_iraq\\_suit\\_032610/](http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2010/03/ap_military_contractors_iraq_suit_032610/)>

**F-35 COSTS SET TO SOAR, SAYS PENTAGON**

Bob Cox - Fort Worth Star-Telegram - April 07, 2010

Defense Department officials have told Congress that the already ballooning costs of the F-35 joint strike fighter are likely to soar much higher when new estimates are completed in the summer.

In the Selected Acquisition Report for the F-35, a detailed document sent to Congress on Thursday, the Pentagon said it expects that cost studies now under way will produce estimates dramatically higher than those used in recent months to

prepare the 2011 defense budget request. Based on figures in the document, the average cost of one F-35 -- \$62 million when the program was launched in 2002 -- could rise to \$115.5 million, not counting inflation, by the time all 2,457 planes that the U.S. plans to buy are built. Including inflation, the government now expects each F-35 to cost an average of \$133.6 million. But even that figure could swell to more than \$150 million when revised estimates are completed in June.

<More at: [www.star-telegram.com/2010/04/06/2094443/cost-estimate-for-f-35-to-soar.html](http://www.star-telegram.com/2010/04/06/2094443/cost-estimate-for-f-35-to-soar.html)>

## **PENTAGON TIGHTENS BAN ON SUPREMACIST ACTIVITY AFTER YEARS OF DENYING PROBLEM**

Booth Gunter - April 13, 2010

Since the Southern Poverty Law Center warned the U.S. military about extremist activity among active-duty personnel in 2006, the Pentagon brass has steadfastly denied that a problem existed and insisted that its "zero-tolerance" policy was sufficient to keep organized racists out of its ranks.

That changed this past November, when the Pentagon quietly tightened its policy on extremist activity, which formerly only banned "active participation" in extremist groups but did not define what that meant.

Under the new regulations, military personnel "must not actively advocate supremacist doctrine, ideology or causes" or "otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights." The new rules specify that "active participation" includes activities such as recruiting, fundraising, demonstrating or rallying, training, organizing and distributing supremacist material, including online posts. <More at: [www.splcenter.org/blog/2010/04/13/pentagon-tightens-ban-on-supremacist-activity-after-years-of-denying-problem/](http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2010/04/13/pentagon-tightens-ban-on-supremacist-activity-after-years-of-denying-problem/)>

## **GUESS HE DIDN'T TAKE THE SAME CLASSES ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY THAT WE DID MILITARY: BIRTHINGER LIEUTENANT COLONEL UNDER INVESTIGATION AFTER REFUSING ORDERS**

Justin Elliott - April 13, 2010

A decorated Army doctor who publicly announced last month that he is refusing to follow orders because he believes Barack Obama may be ineligible to be president is now under investigation after failing to report for duty at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, a military spokesman tells TPMuckraker. NBC is reporting, citing unnamed military officials, that the Army will court martial Lt. Col Terrence Lakin. <More at: [http://tpmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/04/military\\_birthinger\\_lieutenant\\_colonel\\_under\\_investigation.php](http://tpmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/04/military_birthinger_lieutenant_colonel_under_investigation.php)>

## **BIRTHINGER ARMY DOC GETS HELP FROM FMR. GOP HILL STAFFER AND EX-SENATOR'S FOUNDATION**

Justin Elliott - April 14, 2010The Birthinger Army doctor who is reportedly facing a court martial for refusing orders is getting crucial assistance from an ex-congressional staffer and Bush Administration vet with a colorful past as well as from a charitable foundation that was founded in 2003 by a Republican senator, originally to aid the families of slain soldiers [*Ed. The charity no longer lists veterans or soldiers among its causes*]. <More at: [http://tpmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/04/birthinger\\_army\\_doc\\_gets\\_help\\_from\\_fmr\\_gop\\_insider\\_an.php](http://tpmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/04/birthinger_army_doc_gets_help_from_fmr_gop_insider_an.php)>

## **AMERICAN AIRLINES PARTNERS WITH "BEST IN CLASS" VETERANS' CHARITY TO PROVIDE MEDICAL FLIGHTS**

April 6 - PRNewswire - USNewswire

They come home with missing limbs, hearing loss, embedded shrapnel, and most devastating of all, invisible wounds of mind and spirit related to combat. For healing to take place, they need specialized care: therapy, counseling, rehab, and family members by their side. But often it is difficult for these American heroes to access distant medical services when they need them.

Committed to the healing of wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and to all veterans, American Airlines, through its Veterans Initiative, awarded a check for \$100,000 to Air Compassion for Veterans (ACV) at a recent luncheon briefing held on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. This was the first installment of a potential million dollar pledge made by the airline company. <More at: [www.veteransresources.org/2010/04/american-airlines-partners-with-best-in-class-veterans-charity-to-provide-medical-flights/](http://www.veteransresources.org/2010/04/american-airlines-partners-with-best-in-class-veterans-charity-to-provide-medical-flights/)>

## **LOCKHEED MARTIN ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP TO OUTFIT FORT MEADE TRANSITION UNIT**

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. - PRNewswire - April 14 2010

Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) today announced a partnership with the Fort Meade Alliance and the USO of Metropolitan Washington to outfit the Fort Meade Soldier and Family Assistance Center, which breaks ground April 19.

The Assistance Center will be a resource for transitioning wounded warriors and their families and will offer guidance, resources and support services. The Lockheed Martin donation will help provide essential furnishings and equipment for the 4,500-square-foot center, which will include meeting and computer rooms, training space, media and recreation rooms, kitchen, children's activity center and playground.

<More at: [www.veteransresources.org/2010/04/lockheed-martin-announces-partnership-to-outfit-fort-meade-transition-unit/](http://www.veteransresources.org/2010/04/lockheed-martin-announces-partnership-to-outfit-fort-meade-transition-unit/)>

### TO THE COLORS - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Notes
4/22		Wilmington NC	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Frank Roberts</a>	910-279-0823
4/22-4/25		Veterans Park Washington, NC	The Wall That Heals	VFW Post 6088	
4/29		Rochester, NY	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Nena Siverd</a>	585-546-4250
4/29	1000-1600	Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel - BWI 1100 Old Elkridge Landing Road Baltimore, MD	Career Expo		<a href="#">Register</a>
4/29-5/2		The Wall That Heals Orangeburg, SC	The Wall That Heals	City of Orangeburg	
4/30		St. Cloud, MN	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Nick Johnston</a>	320-255-6320
5/6	1000-1600	Holiday Inn Select Atlanta Perimeter 4386 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd Atlanta, GA	Career Expo		<a href="#">Register</a>
5/6-5/9		Dan Daniel Memorial Park Danville, Virginia	The Wall That Heals	Dennis Forslund	
5/13-5/16		Bethel Woods Center for the Arts Bethel, New York	The Wall That Heals	The Museum at Bethel Woods	
5/15		Lakeland, FL	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Jenna Cox/Ginny Zoller</a>	863-534-5202
5/21		Tucson, AZ	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Joe Niznik</a>	520-243-6693

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

### TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

#### **MIDEAST WARS' UNSUNG HEROES: THE WIVES LEFT BEHIND**

Steve Lopez latimes.com April 7, 2010

Husbands' repeated deployments mean years of worry, plus the stress of handling everything at home on their own. Then there's how to handle their changed spouses when they come home.

Five women sit at a dining room table in Camp Pendleton, talking about the dreadful task of saying goodbye to their husbands.

Again.

As you read this, their Marines, as they call them, are on the way to Afghanistan for seven months, maybe longer. Most of the Marines have already been to Iraq, and Holly Lavelly's husband, Patrick, twice injured by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), is fit again and on his 10th deployment.

"The second time he was hurt, I was sure that was it -- he was going to die," Lavelly says.

"You know that feeling of dread and going OK, you know he has been hurt twice. This isn't good. I can't rationalize this anymore. It's hard. It's very scary."

But here she is, rationalizing again, and doing what spouses do:

Taking over all household duties, from bill-paying to diaper-changing to lawn-mowing.

Telling the kids not to worry, Daddy will be OK.

And saving doubt, fear and tears for quiet moments when no one is watching.

... You may have questions about the wisdom of these wars, as I've had from the beginning. But there's no doubting the sacrifices the Marines and their spouses are making. <More at: [latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez7-2010apr07\\_0\\_3039854.column](http://latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez7-2010apr07_0_3039854.column)>

### **TURNING OUR BACKS ON HEROES**

Bob Herbert - April 6, 2010

...There is a strong tendency, in our collective national consciousness, to give short shrift to the many thousands of Americans who are suffering grievously as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The wars have become like white noise in our culture. They hit the front pages from time to time, and there are evenings when some aspect of the wars are featured on the national news telecasts. But we have no real sense of the extraordinary sacrifices that have been made by the young men and women who are fighting these wars in our name.

The agony for many of the wounded has been all but unbearable — those who have lost limbs or been paralyzed or horribly burned, or who lost their hearing or eyesight. The suffering extends to the families and loved ones of the wounded, and in all too many cases will last throughout their lives. These are peculiar wars in that the impact on the warriors inevitably is profound, while the effect of the wars on most other Americans is minimal.

There is something shameful — dishonorable — about relegating these warriors to the background. We sent them into hell and we owe them, at the very least, our grateful acknowledgement of their tremendous efforts and boundless sacrifices. There is no way to do that without paying serious attention to them. <More at: [www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/opinion/06herbert.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/opinion/06herbert.html)>

### **REVOLVING DOOR OF MULTIPLE TOURS LINKED TO PTSD**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - April 11, 2010

It wasn't his first tour in Iraq, but his second and third when Joe Callan began wondering how long his luck would last -- how many more months he could swerve around bombs buried in the dirt and duck mortars raining from the skies.

It was only natural, considering the horrors he'd seen: One buddy killed when a mortar engulfed his tent in flames. A fresh-faced Marine sniper dead (also a mortar) on his first day in Iraq. A 9-year-old Iraqi boy, blood trickling from his head, after he was mistakenly shot by U.S. troops.

Three tours in four years and Callan wanted out. Out of Iraq, out of the Marines.

"I became numb," he says. "I just wanted to be home. And that became more intense each time."

When Callan did return to New Mexico, he couldn't sleep. He drank heavily. He had a short fuse. "I knew," he now says, "I was different. But I didn't think it was going to be that bad."

Maj. Jeff Hall's world imploded after his second tour in Iraq.

Overwhelmed with guilt and rage, the 18-year Army veteran became so depressed that one day he lay on the ground and pointed a pistol at his head. The only reason he didn't kill himself, he says, is he didn't want his two daughters to discover him. "I couldn't do that to my kids," he says. "I had seen people with their heads blown off."

But the war had pushed Hall to the brink. "I had no peace at all," he says.

No peace -- on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, or in the minds of men and women who fought there. Callan and Hall are among hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops who've served multiple tours; they're also among the tens of thousands diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. That is not a coincidence.

<More at: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/11/AR2010041100003\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/11/AR2010041100003_pf.html)>

### **FOR THE BATTLE-SCARRED, COMFORT AT LEASH'S END**

JANIE LORBER - April 2, 2010

WASHINGTON — Just weeks after Chris Goehner, 25, an Iraq war veteran, got a dog, he was able to cut in half the dose of anxiety and sleep medications he took for post-traumatic stress disorder. The night terrors and suicidal thoughts that kept him awake for days on end ceased.

Aaron Ellis, 29, another Iraq veteran with the stress disorder, scrapped his medications entirely soon after getting a dog — and set foot in a grocery store for the first time in three years.

The dogs to whom they credit their improved health are not just pets. Rather, they are psychiatric service dogs specially trained to help traumatized veterans leave the battlefield behind as they reintegrate into society.

<More at: [www.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/us/04dogs.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/us/04dogs.html)>



## **COSTS SOAR FOR COMPENSATING VETS**

Chicago Tribune - April 18, 2010

CHICAGO - Corey Gibson's right leg bounces when he sits. At 29 he sleeps fitfully, with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle mounted above his bed. "That's my sense of security," he says.

Laurie Emmer, a 47-year-old mother of four, shuns crowds and strangers. She always sits facing the restaurant door when she goes out to eat and, before sitting down, makes sure to identify the quickest route out.

And Eric Johnson, 62, who revisits Vietnam nearly every night in his head, escapes the demons who rob him of sleep by patrolling the streets of his South Side neighborhood with his yellow Labrador retriever, Che.

The veterans come from different generations and different wars, yet they share a common and increasingly costly wartime affliction - post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of psychological damage. Last year, mental illnesses accounted for 35 percent of the \$22 billion spent on disability payments to veterans who served in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf and "global war on terror" eras, according to a Chicago Tribune analysis.

Compensating veterans with psychological scars has helped fuel a 76 percent surge in service-related disability costs since 2003, the Tribune found, burdening an already overwhelmed system and underscoring the reality that the biggest costs of war are not often immediate or visible. Studies suggest costs will continue to soar.

<More at: [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-04-12/health/ct-met-veterans-mental-illness-20100412\\_1\\_disorders-service-related-disability](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-04-12/health/ct-met-veterans-mental-illness-20100412_1_disorders-service-related-disability)>

## **VA LABORING UNDER SURGE OF WOUNDED VETERANS**

Jason Grotto and Tim Jones - Tribune reporters - April 11, 2010

In a sobering reminder of the long-term costs of war, a dramatic spike in disability claims during the last seven years has overwhelmed the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and nearly doubled the cost of compensating wounded veterans, according to an unprecedented Tribune analysis.

The bulk of the increases didn't come from veterans of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but from those who served years or even decades before. Veterans from the Vietnam and Persian Gulf eras accounted for roughly 84 percent of the rise in spending, which hit \$34.3 billion last year.

The surge from past eras comes even as more soldiers than expected are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan in need of care. With hundreds of thousands of troops still deployed, the VA already provides disability payments to nearly 200,000 veterans from the current conflicts, a number that is expected to balloon during the next 30 years.

The unanticipated crush of claims is exacerbated by the VA's antiquated compensation system, which hasn't been overhauled since 1945. Cumbersome and heavily bureaucratic, the system requires a mountain of paperwork, is based on diagnoses that lag far behind medical advances and runs on a computer system that is so outdated it can't accurately verify whether veterans were deployed. <More at: [www.cleveland.com/nation/index.ssf/2010/04/va\\_laboring\\_under\\_surge\\_of\\_wou.html](http://www.cleveland.com/nation/index.ssf/2010/04/va_laboring_under_surge_of_wou.html)>

## **VA OFFICIAL: DISABILITY CLAIMS SYSTEM 'CANNOT BE FIXED'**

Rick Maze - March 18, 2010

Baling wire and bandages cannot save the veterans' disability claims process, the Veterans Affairs Department's chief technology officer said Thursday at a roundtable discussion about ways of cutting the growing backlog of claims and improving accuracy.

"In my judgment, it cannot be fixed," said Peter Levin. "We need to build a new system, and that is exactly what we are going to do."

Levin's comments came at a meeting organized by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to toss around ideas for repairing a system that has a backlog of about 1.1 million claims awaiting decisions and an error rate on claims of 17 to 25 percent, depending on who is counting.

Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., the veterans' committee chairman, described the system as an "insult to veterans" who, on average, wait six months for an initial decision on benefits and who can wait for years if the decision is appealed.

<More at: [www.federaltimes.com/article/20100318/DEPARTMENTS04/3180302/1055/AGENCY](http://www.federaltimes.com/article/20100318/DEPARTMENTS04/3180302/1055/AGENCY)>

## **STRICT DEADLINES, DISABLED VETERANS AND DISMISSED CASES**

Adam Liptak - New York Times - April 5, 2010

Three years ago, the Supreme Court said there are some filing deadlines so rigid that no excuse for missing them counts, even if the tardiness was caused by erroneous instructions from a federal judge.

The vote was 5 to 4, and Justice David H. Souter wrote a furious [dissent](#). "It is intolerable for the judicial system to treat people this way," he said, adding that he feared the decision would have pernicious consequences.

He had no idea.

The court's decision concerned a convicted murderer who had beaten a man to death. But now it is being applied to bar claims from disabled veterans who fumble filing procedures and miss deadlines in seeking help from the government. The upshot, according to a dissent in December from three judges on a federal appeals court in Washington, is "a Kafkaesque adjudicatory process in which those veterans who are most deserving of service-connected benefits will frequently be those least likely to obtain them." <More at: [www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/us/06bar.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/us/06bar.html)>

## **BATTLING THE INNER DEMONS OF WAR**

Cordula Meyer - Der Spiegel - 03/25/2010

What Joe Dwyer's Death Can Teach Us about PTSD

A photograph of PFC Joseph Dwyer in Iraq made him an American hero, but five years after returning home, mental combat wounds drove him to his death. He is not alone. In 2009, more than twice as many soldiers died by their own hands than were killed by the enemy in Iraq. But new types of therapy are giving others the chance for the peace he never had.



On an afternoon in June 2008, police in Pinehurst, North Carolina, were dispatched to a white farmhouse. The town is set in an idyllic location, complete with woods, plantation houses and eight golf courses. Many of its inhabitants are retirees, so law enforcement officers generally don't have much to do. But, in the previous months, they had repeatedly been called to this particular address. Its owner, a 31-year-old man named Joe Dwyer, had been barricading himself in his house, where he kept several pistols and a semiautomatic rifle. This time, the officers broke down the door. Once inside, they found Dwyer lying on the ground, covered in feces and urine, gasping for air. "Help me!" the young man begged the officers. "I can't breathe."

<More at: [www.spiegel.de/international/world/0.1518.685442.00.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0.1518.685442.00.html)>

## **COMBAT VET SAYS GENDER BIAS LED TO UNTREATED PTSD**

Terry Gildea - March 21, 2010

According to recent VA statistics, PTSD and depression are the top disability claims among America's female veterans — many of whom served in Iraq and Afghanistan. But many of them have trouble proving that they saw combat — a key to getting treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

A decorated war veteran, Marti Ribeiro's return to America — marked by a divorce and bouts of anxiety — highlights the struggles many female veterans face. Ribeiro, 30, spent eight years in the Air Force, achieving the rank of staff sergeant. She served tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Sitting for an interview recently, Ribeiro smoked a cigarette, looking both tired and nervous.

In 2006, she was embedded with the Army's 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan as a military journalist, covering the unit's humanitarian mission. But on many occasions, Ribeiro, a slender woman with hazel eyes and blond hair, had to drop her camera and pick up her rifle.

Of the attacks on her unit, Ribeiro said, "We were hit with mortars and RPG [rocket-propelled grenades] and it ranges from IED's on our convoys to a lot of small-arms fire."

Ribeiro was awarded the Army's Combat Action Ribbon, but the medal did little to slow the mounting chaos in her life. She was getting ready to separate from the Air Force and return to her husband and young daughter in the United States when her husband filed for a divorce. <More at: [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124500733](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124500733)>

## **VA RECOGNIZES 'PRESUMPTIVE' ILLNESSES IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN**

Department of Veterans Affairs Mar 24, 2010

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, March 24, 2010) -- The Department of Veterans Affairs is taking steps to make it easier for veterans to obtain disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf War and in Afghanistan.

Eric K. Shinseki, the VA secretary said the steps mark the beginning of historic change for how the VA considers Gulf War veterans' illnesses.

Following recommendations made by the Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, the VA is publishing a proposed regulation in the Federal Register that will establish new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War, or in Afghanistan on or after Sept. 19, 2001.

... The proposed rule includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with the nine diseases: brucellosis, campylobacter jejuni, coxiella burnetii (Q fever), malaria, mycobacterium tuberculosis, nontyphoid salmonella, shigella, visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus. <More at: [www.army.mil/news/2010/03/24/36272-va-recognizes-presumptive-illnesses-in-iraq-afghanistan/](http://www.army.mil/news/2010/03/24/36272-va-recognizes-presumptive-illnesses-in-iraq-afghanistan/)>

## **21% CUT FIXED - UNTIL JUNE**

Congress can act fast when it absolutely has to, and it absolutely had to on April 15 - the last day Medicare could avoid imposing a 21% cut in payments to doctors that many doctors say would cause them to stop seeing Medicare and military patients.

Within the space of five hours, the Senate voted to defer the 21% cut until June 1. Because that was a month longer delay than the House proposed, House leaders greased another vote to approve the longer delay, and the bill was rushed to the White House so President Obama could sign it into law that night.

The cuts technically went into effect on April 1, but Medicare exercised its authority to hold claims for up to 10 business days, in anticipation that Congress would approve the delay.

Still, the fact is that this is one more can-kicking exercise.

<More at: [www.moaa.org/lac/lac\\_issues/lac\\_issues\\_update/lac\\_issues\\_update\\_100416.htm#issue1](http://www.moaa.org/lac/lac_issues/lac_issues_update/lac_issues_update_100416.htm#issue1)>

## **VETERANS CLAIM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY VA**

Tim Giago - 29 March 2010

There is a credo lamented daily in the waiting rooms of the Veterans Administration Hospitals scattered across America. It goes, "First you apply, then they deny and hope you will die." This has a special meaning to Native American veterans.

For too many Indian veterans it strikes close to the bone. They are so entangled in bureaucratic red tape they are all but suffocating. Many have been reduced to living lives well below the poverty level set by the very government they fought for and nearly died defending.

Several months ago I wrote about one such veteran named Andres Torres, an Oglala Lakota, living in Rapid City. What has happened to this veteran since then?

"I was told to open a new claim called Unemployability which means I have not been able to work since the second operation they performed on me at Fort Meade VA Hospital in 1989. I filed the claim in February and I have not heard from the VA since. As far as I know it is still sitting on somebody's desk in Sioux Falls or Washington, D. C.," Torres said.

<More at: [www.nativetimes.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3302:giago-veterans-claim-racial-discrimination-by-va&catid=46&Itemid=22](http://www.nativetimes.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3302:giago-veterans-claim-racial-discrimination-by-va&catid=46&Itemid=22)>

## **THOUSANDS OF VETS MISSING OUT ON BETTER BENEFITS**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - New York Times - April 3, 2010

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP) -- Only a fraction of wounded veterans who could get better benefits have applied in the two years since Congress, acting on concerns the military was cutting costs by downplaying injuries, ordered the Pentagon to review disputed claims.

As of mid-March, only 921 vets have applied out of the 77,000 the Pentagon estimates are eligible, according to numbers provided to The Associated Press by the Physical Disability Board of Review. The panel was created in 2008 but started taking cases in January 2009. <More at: [www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/04/03/us/AP-US-Veterans-Disability-Review.html](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/04/03/us/AP-US-Veterans-Disability-Review.html)>

## SICK VETERANS SUE KBR OVER IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN BURN PITS

Salem-News.com - Mar-29-2010

KBR burned biohazard materials including human corpses, medical supplies, paints, solvents, asbestos, pesticides, animal carcasses, tires, lithium batteries, Styrofoam, wood, rubber, medical waste, large amounts of plastics, and even entire trucks.

(WAYNE, N.J.) - A lawsuit was filed alleging that KBR, Inc. (NYSE KBR) endangered the health and safety of American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan by exposing them to huge quantities of toxic dust, fumes and other air pollutants by burning unsorted waste in vast open-air pits without any safety controls. <More at: <http://salem-news.com/articles/march292010/kbr-suit.php>>

## WARNINGS ABOUT LEJEUNE'S TAINTED WATER UNHEEDED FOR YEARS

Barbara Barrett - McClatchy Newspapers - April 18, 2010

WASHINGTON — For 30 years, thousands of Marines and their family members at Camp Lejeune, N.C., drank, cooked with and bathed in water that was laced with dangerous chemicals, but when outside contractors began raising questions about the toxic water, documents show, base officials rebuffed them and ignored the warnings or ordered more tests.

<More at: [www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/04/18/92169/warnings-about-lejeunes-tainted.html](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/04/18/92169/warnings-about-lejeunes-tainted.html)>

## TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

### NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACTIVATED AS OF APRIL 13, 2010

This week the Army, Navy and Coast Guard announced a decrease in activated reservists, while the Marine Corps and Air Force announced an increase. The net collective result is 128 more 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 104,270; Navy Reserve, 6,432; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 16,777; Marine Corps Reserve, 6,443; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 715. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 134,637, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated may be found at [www.defense.gov/news/d20100413ngr.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/d20100413ngr.pdf).

### OIF/OEF – HACK DATE MONAY 19 APRIL2010

#### OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2,587 DAYS)

KILLED US	4,392
WOUNDED US [4/3/10]	31,770
OTHER US CASUALTIES [4/3/10]	≥47,755
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [4/3/10]	207
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 [4/19/10]	≥ 104,595 – 1,366,350
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS[1/20/10]	≥ 400K – 1.432M
IRAQ REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	2.1M/2.5M

#### OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (3,116 DAYS)

KILLED US	1045
WOUNDED US [4/3/10]	5,510
OTHER CASUALTIES US [3/6/10]	11,464
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [3/6/10]	35
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1
KILLED COALITION	687
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2/07)	1,602
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY[7/4/09]	≥ 11,152
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (4/9/2010)	≥ 8,453
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	\$718,274,505,377
COST OF AFGHAN WAR TO DATE	\$266,438,035,196

*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**

### **IT'S A LONG HAUL**

Lt. Gen. James Pillsbury, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Material Command, which helps to oversee the military's contracting work in Iraq, asserted that the drawdown of contractors in Iraq is on track. But he said that moving personnel and equipment out of Iraq is a massive, complex job, with "situations on the ground that are somewhat fluid."

The "magnitude and scope of the Iraq drawdown is unprecedented," Pillsbury said, noting that there are more than 341 facilities; 263,000 soldiers, Defense Department civilians and contractor employees; 83,000 containers; 42,000 vehicles; 3 million equipment items; and roughly \$54 billion in assets that will ultimately be removed from Iraq.

Pillsbury said that the effort is "equivalent, in personnel terms alone, of relocating the entire population of Buffalo, New York." <More at: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/29/AR2010032903509.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/29/AR2010032903509.html)

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

### **TOP 10 FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT HEALTH CARE REFORM**

Angie Drobnic Holan - March 18th, 2010

*We go beyond the slogans and tell you what's really in the bill.*

PolitiFact has checked hundreds of claims about health care reform and read the plans under consideration by Congress... we've selected 10 facts about the actual health care legislation that every voter should know. Agree with the measure or not, here's what it intends to do and where the big unknowns are. We've linked to our previous reporting on each issue throughout the story; click through for even more sources.

<More at: [www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2010/mar/18/top-10-facts-know-about-health-care-reform/](http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2010/mar/18/top-10-facts-know-about-health-care-reform/)

### **NEW DOD BOARD AIMS TO PROVIDE UNIFORM DISABILITY RATINGS**

Matt Pueschel - FHP&R - March 26, 2010

A new DoD board has been established to offer certain veterans an opportunity to appeal their service disability evaluation ratings. At a meeting in the FHP&R offices in late February, Michael LoGrande, president of the DoD [Physical Disability Board of Review](#) (PDBR), provided a group of military and veterans service organizations (MSO/VSO) with an overview of the new board, which was mandated by the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. The PDBR offers a reassessment of service-assigned disability ratings to eligible veterans who apply. The PDBR uses the VA Schedule of Rating Disabilities only, without any service-specific rules, which provides for a more uniform rating across all services. <More at: [www.health.mil/News\\_And\\_Multimedia/News/detail/10-03-26/New\\_DoD\\_Board\\_Aims\\_to\\_Provide\\_Uniform\\_Disability\\_Ratings.aspx](http://www.health.mil/News_And_Multimedia/News/detail/10-03-26/New_DoD_Board_Aims_to_Provide_Uniform_Disability_Ratings.aspx)>

**AT LAST SOMEONE IN THE ARAB WORLD TAKES A STAND! [from one of our deployed members]**

### **IRAQI NATIONAL ALLIANCE LEADER WELCOMES FATWA, DEFINED AS TERRORISM BY THE SCHOLAR COMMITTEE IN SAUDI ARABIA**

17 APR 10, 1340 - Al-Iraq News website - Iraqi National Alliance leader welcomes Fatwa, defined as terrorism by the scholar committee in Saudi Arabia

The INA leader Hamid Maala welcomed the Fatwa issued by scholars from Saudi Arabia, defining the meaning of terrorism. [Monitor's note: A Fatwa is a religious opinion concerning Islamic law]. Maala said, "This is an important step to combat terrorism. The Fatwa will punish severely terrorism and forbid such actions. The issuance of such Islamic legal opinion is important and necessary. The terrorists and extremist groups including Al-Qaeda will not implement the Fatwa and they might even think the Fatwa was issued under governmental and political pressures and doubt its credibility."

Maala added the Fatwa was issued by senior scholars and religious experts in Saudi Arabia. The Fatwa bans the use of residential buildings, aircrafts or trains in explosive attacks. It also bans targeting the governmental resources, in addition to recruiting members who will blow themselves up in the name of Jihad [universally understood as war on behalf of Islam]. <http://al-iraqnews.net/new/political-news/5242.html>>



## NOTICE

If at any time you cannot open a link in this newsletter to an article or web page that interests you, please let me know at [scCook@vuft](mailto:scCook@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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