

# SOUND OFF!



VOL. I, NO 19

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

*“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”*

25 APRIL 2006

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

Does volunteerism bother you? It does me.

Not because there is anything inherently wrong with volunteerism – it is quintessentially American and is one of those elements that is so unique to our culture that Alexis de Tocqueville commented on it repeatedly in his *Democracy in America* in 1835.

What bothers me about volunteerism is that both the executive and the legislature seem to be counting on it to make veterans whole. There is even a government website to solicit volunteers at [www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil).

There is no need to build disabled-friendly housing for wounded veterans, if communities will do it for them, e.g., Homes for Our Troops [www.homesfourtroops.org](http://www.homesfourtroops.org).

There is no need to worry about the families of deployed soldiers when volunteers will take care of them, e.g., Operation Home Front. [www.operationhomefront.net](http://www.operationhomefront.net)

There is no need to provide mental health counseling, if volunteers will take care of it at no expense to the government. These are mostly community based, although organizations like Vietnam Veterans of America [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org), and Vietnam Veterans Against the War [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org) assist in connecting veterans with volunteer counselors.

There is no need to provide guide dogs if volunteers will provide them., e.g. NEADS. [www.neads.org/index.shtml](http://www.neads.org/index.shtml)..

There is no need to provide accommodations for the families of the wounded during their recovery if volunteers will contribute and pay for it, e.g. Fisher House [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org).

There is no need to provide adequate helmets and body armor if people will buy their own and if groups will volunteer to purchase it for the soldiers, e.g. Operation Helmet [www.operation-helmet.org](http://www.operation-helmet.org).

There is no need to keep soldiers in touch with their families if volunteers will donate telephone charge cards, e.g. VFW's Operation Uplink [www.operationuplink.org](http://www.operationuplink.org).

There is no need to take care of homeless veterans if others will do it voluntarily, e.g. Swords-to-Plowshares [www.swords-to-plowshares.org](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org) or US Vets [www.usvetsinc.org](http://www.usvetsinc.org).

These are examples only; there are many volunteer organizations, and I hope all who are not mentioned will forgive me. What happens to veterans if these efforts ever stop?

I am not against volunteerism. I do some of it myself. What I am against is allowing the incredible services of the volunteers and their donors to mask the total cost of war – a cost all of us should be bearing.

If a man or woman volunteers for military service and returns with needs directly attributable to that service, then meeting those needs should be a responsibility of the government that sent them to war in the first place. Those benefits should not only be readily available, but also should be free and timely.

The government and the legislators are saying that they are doing all that they can: but, several weeks ago I sent all of you a list of almost 300 bills on which almost no action had been taken. How much is really being done?

The same legislators who write bills and crow about them in their stump speeches, spend much more time earmarking budget bills for the constituencies that they really care about. Do you have any idea how many earmarked items were included in the 2006 various budget bills for veterans benefits?

The answer, I am sorry to say, is six out of the 9,963 earmarked items (I didn't count such things as new sports facilities at a city's "Veterans Memorial Park" as being a benefit to veterans.) That is **six/100ths of one percent of the bills**.

The dollar amount \$4,050,000 out of \$29,000,000,000 in earmarks amounts to **14/1,000ths of one percent of the cash**.

We veterans are 8% of the population (see the table at the end of this issue); yet, while legislators felt it imperative to guarantee spending of almost \$100 per citizen in these earmarked items, we got 1.4 cents in this pork barrel per veteran.

Remember this when you hear their speeches about how much they care.

Come to think of it, thank God for the volunteers!

## REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS

### **WAKE UP! SPREAD THE NEWS!**

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

### **CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE!**

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE AT [WWW.VUFT.ORG](http://www.vuft.org). CHECK OUT THE "CANDIDATES" PAGE, WHICH IS OUR EFFORT TO LIST ALL VETERANS RUNNING FOR STATE-WIDE AND FEDERAL OFFICE IN THE U.S.; IT IS BEING UPDATED DAILY. PLEASE HELP US MAKE THIS AS COMPLETE A LIST AS POSSIBLE BY SENDING CANDIDATE INFO TO [SANDY.COOK@VUFT.ORG](mailto:SANDY.COOK@VUFT.ORG).

**IF YOU HAVE ONE OF THESE IN YOUR STATE, LET US KNOW. WE ARE BUILDING A REFERENCE PAGE FOR OUR WEBSITE**

## **NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

### **Online Veterans Resource Directory User Friendly**

The California Department of Veterans Affairs announces a new online user-friendly California Veterans Resource Directory. The California Veterans Resource Directory is a comprehensive, searchable database of services available to California veterans, their survivors and dependents at the federal, state and local levels. The online California Veterans Resource Directory is available at [www.cdva.ca.gov/cvrd/default.asp](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/cvrd/default.asp).

## ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

**NEW MEMBERS** are joining us every week. If you are getting this newsletter and have not yet joined, please go to our website at [www.vuft.org/membership.html](http://www.vuft.org/membership.html) and join. Membership is free. The more our numbers grow, the greater voice we have with legislators. It shouldn't be that way, but it is, so join us and help us take the fight to Congress and the state legislatures.

### **SUPPORTING THE CAUSE**

If you wish to donate to our work you may now do so via PayPal or Visa on our website "Join" page. Every little bit helps. You can also buy our handsome pins using the same method.

## MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

### **STORMING WASHINGTON: VETERANS MARCH TO THE CAPITOL**

As veterans from across the country descend upon Washington, D.C. next week and take part in [Veterans March 2006](#), I thought I'd share a quick story with you today on a few who are taking part (click on 'Article Link' below for that).

If you're going to the event (taking place April 24-26), you can find all the information you need (including program itinerary, guest speakers, lodging help, maps and directions, etc.) online at [www.vetmarch2006.net](http://www.vetmarch2006.net). **Resources for those of us who unfortunately can't be a part of this:** Catch streaming [online coverage](#) beginning at 0900 on Tuesday morning; or tune in to [Stardust Radio's](#) coverage. Go, vets, go!

<More at: <http://ptsdcombat.blogspot.com/2006/04/storming-washington-veterans-march-to.html>>

From Ilona at ptsdcombat: Winninghte War Within

## RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

### **SENATE AND HOUSE BILLS WOULD BAN PROTESTING AT MILITARY FUNERALS**

Two bills have been introduced in the House and Senate that would ban protesting at military funerals.

The House bill, [Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act HR 5037](#), was sponsored by Mike Rogers (R-MI) and has garnered the support of many House members including Silvestre Reyes (D-Texas), House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Steve Buyer (R-IN), Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL), and now House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL).

<More at: <http://wizbangblog.com/2006/04/20/senate-and-house-bills-would-ban-protesting-at-military-funerals.php>>

## **GAO REPORT**

The GAO has released a new report "RESERVE FORCES: Plans Needed to Improve Army National Guard Equipment Readiness and Better Integrate Guard into Army Force Transformation Initiatives" which shows how the Army National Guard has been bled dry of equipment and how their readiness posture has been destroyed. As one critic put it, "No matter how you do it, eventually the piper must be paid." <The report can be found at: [www.gao.gov/new.items/d06111.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06111.pdf)>

## **WAR COSTS APPROACH \$10 BILLION A MONTH**

Jonathan Weisman - Washington Post - April 20, 2006

### **Military faces huge maintenance tab and spending to replace depleted equipment**

**Washington** -- Annual war expenditures in Iraq will almost certainly come close to doubling since the U.S. invasion, as the military confronts the rapidly escalating cost of repairing, rebuilding and replacing equipment chewed up by three years of war.

The cost of the war in U.S. fatalities has declined this year [so far], but the cost in treasure continues to rise -- from \$48 billion in 2003 to \$59 billion in 2004 to \$81 billion in 2005 to an anticipated \$94 billion in 2006, according to the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. The U.S. government is now spending nearly \$10 billion a month in Iraq and Afghanistan, up from \$8.2 billion a year ago, a new Congressional Research Service report found.

Annual war costs in Iraq are easily outpacing the \$61 billion a year that the United States spent in Vietnam between 1964 and 1972, in today's dollars. The Iraq invasion's "shock and awe" phase of high-tech laser-guided bombs, cruise missiles and stealth aircraft has long faded, but the costs of even those early months are just coming into view as the military confronts equipment repair and rebuilding costs it has avoided and procurement costs it never expected.

<More at: URL: <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/04/20/MNGGOIBTNQ1.DTL>>

## **PENTAGON BUILDS UP FORCES IN PACIFIC**

Associated Press | April 21, 2006

WASHINGTON - An important subtext of Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to the White House is the growing U.S.-China military competition. As China's defense spending surges, the Pentagon is pursuing a strategy of strengthening its forces in the Asia-Pacific region as a hedge against the potential emergence of a hostile China.

The Navy is putting a larger proportion of its submarine fleet in the Pacific, plans to add one aircraft carrier battle group in that region and is outfitting strategic missile submarines with non-nuclear cruise missiles. The Air Force has been improving its ability to deploy B-2 stealth bombers from Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific; the Marines are shifting some troops to Guam; the Army has talked of moving the headquarters of its I Corps, which focuses on potential conflicts in the Pacific, from Fort Lewis, Wash., to Japan. <More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,94958,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,94958,00.html)>

## **VIETNAM VETERAN TRIES TO CLEAR UP HIS "DEATH"**

Associated Press Apr. 20, 2006

FLORENCE, Ala. - James L. Hogan got some shocking news in the mail last month. He'd been dead for months, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The department wrote to the Vietnam veteran's "estate" seeking a return of the \$23,231 in veteran benefits issued to Hogan since his "death."

"Based on that amount, I figure I must've died sometime around July," said Hogan, who is alive and living in Florence. "I'm still trying to get an answer as to who signed my death certificate."

Although Hogan has kept a sense of humor about the mistake, it's caused plenty of problems. The Veterans Affairs office stopped his benefits. Hogan said he has about \$8,000 coming to him. He's already had to let his home health care worker go, because he couldn't pay her. He also worries about medical bills and paying rent for his apartment.

<More at: [www.timesdaily.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060420/NEWS/604200333/0/ARCHIVES30](http://www.timesdaily.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060420/NEWS/604200333/0/ARCHIVES30)>

## **CLUB A BUFFER FOR MILITARY FUNERAL PROTEST**

Apr. 21, 2006

A motorcycle club protected mourners at a U.S. military funeral in Iowa from an anti-gay church that believes war deaths are the result of homosexuality. The Patriot Guard lined up between members of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., and the family burying 22-year-old Daniel Sesker in Ogden, Iowa. Sesker was a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq.

<More at: [www.washingtontimes.com/upi/20060419-064452-3665r.htm](http://www.washingtontimes.com/upi/20060419-064452-3665r.htm)>

## **DRAFT BOARDS STAY READY — JUST IN CASE**

Pauline Jelinek - April 20, 2006 - *Associated Press*

Sitting on a military draft board is not a taxing job right now. With no draft, the boards have, well, no work to do — nearly 11,000 people training for a crisis that may never come.

"It's not hard at all. There's nothing to it," deadpans Michael Cohen, a Selective Service System board member from Highland Park, Ill.

That could change if there is a national crisis and if the government decides the crisis requires a return to the draft that ended 33 years ago. Officials say they don't expect to restart conscription — public sentiment is heavily against it — but should they, draft boards could face their biggest work load in history as they help decide who gets drafted and who doesn't.

<More at: [www.armytimes.com/print.php?f=1-292925-1719431.php](http://www.armytimes.com/print.php?f=1-292925-1719431.php)>

## **TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
4/25-26/06		Washington DC	<a href="#">Veterans March</a>	Various Groups	VA funding
4/25	0800	Nationwide – state capitols	Veterans March	Various Groups	VA funding
6/23-6/24		Chicago Armory - North Ave	Veterans Stand down	VVAW	Homeless Vets
8/10-8/13		Seattle. WA – place TBD	National Convention	Veterans for Peace	Periodic Meeting

**Let us know about meetings and gatherings and we will advertise them**

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

## **TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES**

### **GROUP DONATES HOME TO WOUNDED SOLDIER**

American Forces Press Service | Donna Miles | April 19, 2006

WASHINGTON - Three years ago, Army Pfc. Sam Ross Jr. was disposing of munitions near Baghdad when an explosion took his eyesight, his left leg, part of his hearing and, ultimately, his military career.

Last month, the former 82nd Airborne Division soldier moved into a custom-built log cabin specially designed and built for his needs, courtesy of "Homes for Our Troops." <More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,94670,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,94670,00.html)>

### **UT SOUTHWESTERN GETS \$75 MILLION FOR GULF WAR ILLNESS STUDY**

Associated Press - Angela K. Brown - Apr. 21, 2006

**DALLAS** - When a few doctors began researching the memory loss, dizziness and loss of motor functions of some soldiers who had returned from the first Gulf War, they relied on private funding because of widespread skepticism about the illness.

But the government and medical community took notice after a 1997 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that the veterans had brain damage, not a psychological condition or stress. Attitudes slowly began changing, and a study a few years later showed that one in seven Gulf War veterans is sick.

Now the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas will receive \$15 million a year for five years and is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' designated Gulf War illness research center. Officials from the hospital and VA, which is funding the program, signed the formal partnership agreement Friday. ...

U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) helped secure government funding in 1998, and the newly designated \$75 million over the next five years was a provision sponsored by Hutchison in a spending bill for military construction and VA programs.

<More at: [www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/world/14400239.htm](http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/world/14400239.htm)>

### **EX-SOLDIER GETS HELP IN BATTLE WITH ARMY**

Mike Billington - News-Journal (Delaware) - Apr 20, 2006

Reginald Tyler walked slowly across the living room of his Wilmington home and sat down on the couch.

Still about 30 pounds underweight after having 80 percent of his cancer-ridden stomach removed in 2002 to save his life, Tyler is no longer the energetic soldier he once was.

And yet, the 45-year-old flashed a bright smile and said he feels blessed. "The doctors say that about 66 percent of the people who have this operation die within five years," he said. "I feel like I'm getting stronger, though. I feel like I'm going to make it. Every morning when I wake up I thank God for another day."

Tyler spent 10 years on active duty and another 16 as a full-time member of the National Guard. He has been unable to work since his surgery and a lengthy regimen of follow-up treatments. The Army washed its hands of him when it cut him loose from the hospital, and he has been trying for nearly four years to get a disability pension.

For much of that time he fought the military bureaucracy on his own, but he now has two powerful allies -- U.S. Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., and the Veterans Assistance Program at the Widener University School of Law in Brandywine Hundred.

<More at: [www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060417/NEWS/604170336/-1/NEWS01](http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060417/NEWS/604170336/-1/NEWS01)>

## **PROGRAM MATCHES SERVICE DOGS WITH COMBAT VETERANS**

Corinne Thibodeau [Leominster, MA] Champion Correspondent

What is light brown, very fluffy, and full of love to give away?

It's Gunny, a 12-week old golden retriever, a participant in a puppy training program for the Canines for Combat Veterans Program.

The pup is now in his beginning training stages where he will soon learn to obey simple commands such as sit, stay and lay down. This stage of training is like being in puppy kindergarten and Gunny will be taught the things he needs to prepare him for his life as a service dog. In return, Gunny will respond to his owner's needs 24/7, only requiring love and praise in return.

Leominster's George (Doc) Fregeau of the Marine Corps League North Central Detachment #1076 and Sheila O'Brien, chief executive officer of National Education for Assistance Dog Services (NEADS), founded the Canines for Combat Veterans Program in 2005.

The dogs used for this program are being trained by NEADS at its Princeton headquarters. The program is the only one of its kind in New England. <More at: [www.leominsterchamp.com/news/2006/0421/Neighborhoods/006.html](http://www.leominsterchamp.com/news/2006/0421/Neighborhoods/006.html)>

## **MANY AMERICAN VETERANS WIND UP ON THE STREETS**

Michele Munz - St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Apr. 22 2006

They enlist because it's their only opportunity for a better life. Some to escape poverty, others to escape abuse. But they leave facing even bigger challenges. They are America's soldiers. They are America's homeless.

One out of every three men stopping you for spare change or sleeping on a park bench has served our country, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and a national survey.

National studies also show:

- 47 percent of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era.
- 67 percent served three or more years.
- 33 percent were stationed in a war zone.
- 76 percent experience alcohol, drug or mental health problems.

<More at: [www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/stlouiscitycounty/story/9982A012C52E4B3D862571580072E2F1](http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/stlouiscitycounty/story/9982A012C52E4B3D862571580072E2F1)>

## **AND EVEN OBVIOUS POSSIBILITIES FOR HELP ARE UNAVAILABLE**

### **STEERING THE NEEDY IN A NEW DIRECTION**

Steve Lopez - April 23, 2006 - Los Angeles Times

Bobby Shriver, who walks fast and talks faster, is pacing the largely abandoned grounds of the Veterans Administration above Wilshire Boulevard. The Santa Monica City Council member has just led me through a cluster of mostly empty buildings toward the back of the property, where it abuts Brentwood, and something is bothering him.

"Twenty years," he says. "Twenty years! Homeless people have been sleeping on the beach and on skid row, and they're *veterans*."

Wanna know why they're sleeping under the stars while VA buildings that could house them sit empty? Shriver's got the answer. It's because all you have to do, in Brentwood or anywhere else, is mention the words "homeless project" and people get nervous.

<More at: [www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez23apr23,1,486326.column](http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez23apr23,1,486326.column)>

## **CRAIG AND AKAKA INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO INCREASE COLA FOR DISABLED VETERANS**

April 7, 2006

(Washington, DC) U.S. Senators Larry Craig and Daniel Akaka have introduced legislation (S. 2562) to increase the amount of money veterans with service connected disabilities will receive. The legislation will also increase the compensation for the survivors of some disabled veterans. If approved by Congress, the increase will become effective on December 1, 2006.

<More at: [www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvanews/senatecvanews04-07-06.htm](http://www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvanews/senatecvanews04-07-06.htm)>

## **LIMBS LOST TO ENEMY FIRE, WOMEN FORGE A NEW REALITY**

Donna St. George - Washington Post Staff Writer - April 18, 2006; A01

Her body had been maimed by war. Dawn Halfaker lay unconscious at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, her parents at her bedside and her future suddenly unsure. A rocket-propelled grenade had exploded in her Humvee, ravaging her arm and shoulder.

In June 2004, she became the newest soldier to start down a path almost unknown in the United States: woman as combat amputee.

It was a distinction she did not dwell on during days of intense pain and repeated surgeries or even as she struggled to eat on her own, write left-handed and use an artificial limb. But scattered among her experiences were moments when she was aware that few women before her had rethought their lives, their bodies, their choices, in this particular way.

She was part of a new generation of women who have lost pieces of themselves in war, experiencing the same physical trauma and psychological anguish as their male counterparts. But for female combat amputees has come something else: a quiet sense of wonder about how the public views them and how they will reconcile themselves.

<More at: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/17/AR2006041701260.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/17/AR2006041701260.html)>

## **VA DATA SHOW TWICE AS MANY VETERANS WAITING FOR HEALTH CARE**

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) data show that the number of new veterans enrolled in the department's health care system and waiting for their first clinic appointment to be scheduled has doubled in the year. As of April 2005, 15,211 veterans were waiting. This month, the number has ballooned to 30,475. Over the course of two years, the number of new enrollees waiting has increased by over 400 percent. <More at: [www.vawatchdog.org/housecvademsnews/housecvademsnews04-20-06.htm](http://www.vawatchdog.org/housecvademsnews/housecvademsnews04-20-06.htm)>

## **ARMY SUICIDES ON THE RISE**

April 22, 2006.

The number of U.S. Army soldiers who took their own lives increased last year to the highest total since 1993, despite a growing effort by the Army to detect and prevent suicides. In 2005, a total of 83 soldiers committed suicide, compared with 67 in 2004, and 60 in 2003 \_ the year U.S.-led forces invaded Iraq. Four other deaths in 2005 are being investigated as possible suicides but have not yet been confirmed. The totals include active duty Army soldiers and deployed National Guard and Reserve troops.

<More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0.13319.95096.00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0.13319.95096.00.html)>

## **EVEN IF THERE WAS NO IMPROPRIETY. "THE APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST" IS AN IMPORTANT CONCEPT.**

## **VA CONTRACTS GO TO EX-CHIEF'S COMPANY**

Walter F. Roche Jr. - Times Staff Writer - April 23, 2006

**Anthony J. Principi has held key positions at the Diamond Bar medical firm before and after heading the agency. Fees could exceed \$1 billion.**

WASHINGTON — A Diamond Bar company headed by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi could get fees exceeding \$1 billion from the VA, much of it on contracts approved and amended while he ran the agency, records show.

Principi was president of the medical services company QTC Management Inc. before he joined President Bush's Cabinet in 2001. He ran the VA for four years, then returned to the firm as chairman of the board.

While he was VA secretary, Principe's past and future corporate home collected about \$246 million in fees, according to VA records. Congressional Budget Office projections show the contracts could be worth as much as \$1.2 billion through 2008.

... Right after becoming head of the VA, Principi appointed a task force on the backlog of veterans' claims. In its report to Principi, the panel lauded QTC's performance and recommended that the medical exam program continue or expand. ... Principi said he had nothing to do with that review or the recommendation. The head of that panel later was appointed a top deputy to

Principi. The favorable Principi task force report was cited as justification for language inserted in the 2003 VA budget authorizing continuation and expansion of the program. That extension and expansion had been requested by Principi's agency.

The task force urged that the expansion and continuation be done on a competitive basis; the VA awarded a new contract to QTC after giving rival contractors 30 days to submit proposals. No other bids were submitted. Some competitors said they learned of the new contract only after it was awarded. Sahniah Lambert, a physician with MSLA, a competing firm based in Pasadena, said she contacted the VA about bidding, but no one returned her calls.

... Veterans groups and radio talk shows recently have seized on Principi's ties to QTC and accused him of conflicts of interest. John Hennon, who broadcasts a veterans show in Illinois, said he was convinced that QTC "was contracted to deny as many claims as it could." He blamed Principi. He said it was "not a surprise" that the former secretary had an interest in QTC.

...North Carolina attorney Hugh Cox, who frequently represents veterans, accuses the company of working with the VA to deny disability claims.

"Significant numbers of QTC medical examiners issue addendums to previous medical reports creating an appearance that VA officials communicate off-the-record with the QTC examiners to alter the veteran's chance of receiving benefits," Cox wrote in an e-mail response to questions. <More at: [www.latimes.com/news/local/la-na-contractor23apr23\\_0\\_5890330.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-na-contractor23apr23_0_5890330.story)>

### **IF WE HAD UNIVERSAL COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL CARE, THINK HOW MUCH MEDICAL CARE THAT \$1.2 BILLION IN FEES AND PROFIT COULD PAY FOR**

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

### **IF YOU ONLY "CLICK THROUGH" ON ONE STORY THIS ISSUE, THIS IS THE ONE THEY ARE THE TROOPS THAT NOBODY WANTS TO SEE, CARRYING A MESSAGE THAT NO MILITARY FAMILY EVER WANTS TO HEAR.**

#### **It begins with a knock at the door.**

For the past year, the *Rocky Mountain News* has followed Maj. Steve Beck as he takes on the most difficult duty of his career: casualty notification. As Beck and his comrades at Buckley Air Force Base keep constant watch over the caskets of the men they never knew, the Marines also comfort the families of the fallen, and choke back tears of their own.

It's all part of a tradition that started in 1775: Never leave a Marine behind. After the knock on the door, the story has only begun. More at: [www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/news/article/0,1299,DRMN\\_3\\_4224657,00.html](http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/news/article/0,1299,DRMN_3_4224657,00.html)>

### **AIRMEN MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII ARE IDENTIFIED**

April 21, 2006

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of eleven U.S. airmen, missing in action from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Capt. Thomas C. Paschal, El Monte, Calif.; 1st Lt. Frank P. Giugliano, New York, N.Y.; 1st Lt. James P. Gullion, Paris, Texas; 2nd Lt. Leland A. Rehmet, San Antonio, Texas; 2nd Lt. John A. Widsteen, Palo Alto, Calif.; Staff Sgt. Richard F. King, Moultrie, Ga.; Staff Sgt. William Lowery, Republic, Pa.; Staff Sgt. Elgin J. Luckenbach, Luckenbach, Texas.; Staff Sgt. Marion B. May, Amarillo, Texas.; Sgt. Marshall P. Borofsky, Chicago, Ill.; Sgt. Walter G. Harm, Philadelphia, Penn.; all U.S. Army Air Forces. [www.defenselink.mil/releases/2006/nr20060421-12857.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2006/nr20060421-12857.html)>

### **ANOTHER KIND OF HERO: A BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL INTERROGATOR FOR WHOM TORTURE WAS UNNECESSARY BUT RESPECT WAS ESSENTIAL**

### **OTIS CARY, 84; NAVY LINGUIST PLAYED NOVEL ROLE IN U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS**

Elaine Woo, Times Staff Writer - April 23, 2006

When Otis Cary interrogated Japanese prisoners during World War II, he softened them with gifts of magazines, cigarettes and chocolates. He broke through their reserve with humor. And he spoke to them in flawless Japanese — shocking from a blond-haired American.

Cary spoke like a native because he was one — the son and grandson of New England missionaries in Japan. With missionary-like ardor, he proselytized for the Allied cause, persuading many of the prisoners to cooperate in efforts to end the war and help rebuild Japan as a democracy.

... Cary's deep understanding of the Japanese enabled him to help the POWs overcome their shame at having been captured and their fears of returning home in disgrace. He encouraged them to see themselves as patriots, who had given their all to their country and who now had a duty to support its reconstruction.

<More at: [www.latimes.com/news/obituaries/la-me-cary23apr23\\_0,3493216.full.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/obituaries/la-me-cary23apr23_0,3493216.full.story)>

## **NATIONAL GUARD (IN FEDERAL STATUS) AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF APRIL 19, 2006**

This week, the Army and Air Force announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard numbers decreased. The net collective result is a 2,297 increase in reservists mobilized this week than last week.

At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 89,654; Navy Reserve, 5,495; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,798; Marine Corps Reserve, 6,606; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 404. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 109,957, including both units and individual augmentees.

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2006/d20060419nqr.pdf>.

### **OIF/OEF – HACK DATE SUNDAY APRIL 23, 2006**

#### **OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**

KILLED US	2,389
WOUNDED US [EST. NO DoD UPDATE SINCE 6 APR]≥	17,648
KILLED UK	104
KILLED OTHER COALITION	106
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	640
KILLED CONTRACTORS	318
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 34,512
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 38,660
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 139,262

#### **OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

KILLED US	285
WOUNDED/INJURED US	711
KILLED COALITION	75
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	401
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS	32,034

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

TO SEE THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE CASUALTIES GO TO [WWW.MILITARYCITY.COM/2000CASUALTIES/](http://WWW.MILITARYCITY.COM/2000CASUALTIES/)

## **AFTERTHOUGHTS**

### **VVA ENDORSES VETJOBS, LEADING INTERNET JOB BOARD FOR VETERANS**

4/13/2006 11:00:00 AM

WASHINGTON, April 13 /U.S. Newswire/ -- The following was released Today by Vietnam Veterans of America:

"We at Vietnam Veterans of America are pleased to endorse VetJobs, the nation's largest military-related job board on the Internet," said John Rowan, VVA National President. "With the unemployment rate of newly discharged military veterans hovering around 15 percent-three times the national unemployment rate- VetJobs is a key resource for them and for Vietnam-era veterans too young to retire.

"We have looked at many sites that purport to provide jobs for veterans and their family members," Rowan said. "Our endorsement is meant to let our members know that VVA recognizes the success that VetJobs has had in finding quality jobs for thousands of veterans and their family members. We encourage them to use the VetJobs site: [www.VetJobs.com](http://www.VetJobs.com) ."



## 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

**EXTRAS FOR YOUR USE:**

SUBJECT	% OF TOTAL	% OF VETERANS	% OF NONVETERANS
<b>Civilian population 18 years and over</b>	<b>212,052,116</b>	<b>23,756,268</b>	<b>188,295,848</b>
18 to 64 years	83.9	61.9	86.6
65 to 74 years	8.6	19.3	7.2
75 years and over	7.6	18.9	6.1
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN</b>			
One race	98.7	98.9	98.7
White	77.6	85.5	76.6
Black or African American	11.2	10	11.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.7	0.7	0.7
Asian	4.4	1.2	4.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1
Some other race	4.6	1.4	5.1
Two or more races	1.3	1.1	1.3
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	12.5	4.6	13.5
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	70.3	82.6	68.7
<b>PERIOD OF SERVICE</b>			
Persian Gulf War veterans	(X)	16.4	(X)
Vietnam era veterans	(X)	32.9	(X)
Korean War veterans	(X)	14	(X)
World War II veterans	(X)	15.9	(X)
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>			
<b>Civilian population 25 to 64 years</b>	<b>151,774,973</b>	<b>14,282,143</b>	<b>137,492,830</b>
High school graduate (includes equivalency) or higher	86.7	94.6	85.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	29	24.4	29.5
<b>MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2004 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)</b>			
Median income (dollars) for civilians 18 years and over with income	24,558	32,657	23,291
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION 18 TO 64 YEARS</b>			
<b>Civilian population 18 to 64 years</b>	<b>177,846,815</b>	<b>14,694,047</b>	<b>163,152,768</b>
Female	50.9	8.7	54.7
Labor force participation rate	77.1	78.7	76.9
Unemployment rate	7	6	7
Below poverty level in the past 12 months	11.6	6.3	12.1
With any disability	11.8	17.4	11.3
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OVER</b>			
<b>Civilian population 65 years and over</b>	<b>34,205,301</b>	<b>9,062,221</b>	<b>25,143,080</b>
Female	57.5	3.7	76.9
Below poverty level in the past 12 months	9.4	4.3	11.2
With any disability	39.6	37.6	40.3

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