

SOUND OFF!



VOL. IV, NO 21

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

"VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER"

25 JUNE 2009

FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

PTSD? BULL! IT'S SOLDIER'S HEART!

The late George Carlin did not like the phrase "post-traumatic stress disorder." He said, 'I don't like words that hide the truth. I don't like words that conceal reality. I don't like euphemisms, or euphemistic language. And American English is loaded with euphemisms. Cause Americans have a lot of trouble dealing with reality. Americans have trouble facing the truth, so they invent the kind of a soft language to protect themselves from it, and it gets worse with every generation.'

He went on to describe the devolution of the term from "shell shock" to "battle fatigue" to operational exhaustion", and finally to "post traumatic stress disorder." He posited that the more syllables we add, the greater the euphemistic quality of the expression.

The central point is, as Carlin said, "Americans have a lot of trouble dealing with reality."

What is the reality of war, and what is the reality of those who return from war? During the Civil War they called the residual mental damage from the stress of war "soldier's heart", and that may be the least euphemistic name for it, even after 145 years.

For one thing, the possessive – "soldier's" – tells you that it belongs only to a certain defined class of persons – those who have served their country. Secondly, "heart" tells you that it is at the core of that soldier's being.

It is not, however, a medical "disorder". That is, it is not an illness – something you catch and which generally can be "cured". It is very definitely an imposed condition – something real that the soldier has experienced and from which recovery is never complete, no matter how hard they and we try. Those who claim that they came back from combat

unaffected are either psychopathic or lying to you and themselves.

But, by calling it a disorder – an illness – we can then point out that it doesn't seem to affect everyone, therefore it must affect only those with an underlying weakness, or perhaps "they weren't brought up to be tough". Worst of all, we dismiss them from service under the cover of a "preexisting condition". The soldier who knows that he or she was just fine when leaving home and joining the service, now is told that he or she was really always just spoiled goods.

By calling it a disorder we can turn the focus to the relative post-war weaknesses of the individual, and turn it away from the un-faceable fact that ordinary human beings suffer from this condition because of what we have done to them, not through some fault of their own.

We are the cause, because we sent them to war. It doesn't even matter if the war was a "good" one (isn't that an oxymoron?) or not – it just matters that we can blame the soldier and exonerate ourselves. Of course, the less "good" the war is, the harder it is on them, and the more we are inspired to lay the blame directly on their shoulders.

It is we who have caused their injury, and you can't deal with an injury if you truncate the discussion and make elements of it off-limits. The "disorder" in PTSD is ours. They suffer from our disorder – our mess – our chaos – our confusion – our disarray.

Unfortunately we carry this attitude right over into our feeble attempts to deal with those who have "soldier's heart". Whether families, friends, or professionals, we are afraid to discuss the tough stuff, all in the interest of "protecting the soldier from bad

memories”. All of the unpleasant stuff is off-limits, but it is just that stuff that causes the deepest injuries.

The causes of “soldier’s heart” are myriad but they always include the individual’s wrestling with precisely the morality of his or her actions. They deal with the rightness of what they have done; so must we.

We raise them to be good citizens, non-abusive, considerate of others, and contributing members of a just and democratic society.

Then we train them to kill, send them in to destroy a society, deny them the satisfaction of rebuilding what they have destroyed, and feed them full of the mythology of battle and of our own place in it. We tell them that they are spreading democracy when they know that they are not – not if it involves bullying innocents, summary arrest and detention, and near-free-fire rules of engagement. We pump them up with jingoistic crap about America always being right, regardless of what we do, and that all others are somehow less human, and less deserving of consideration and respect than we are.

We teach them, directly or indirectly, that the main reason for punishing others is that they are failing to obey us – they fail to act as we wish them to. How dare they? Let’s kick ass and take some names. We teach them that, “The only good (enter your enemy’s name here) is a dead (repeat)!” Lately, in order to build up their “warrior instinct”, Marine DIs have been reported to be telling today’s soldiers to be real warriors, and not to be like those whining, no-good Vietnam vets: denigrating those who have gone before, and did it without contractor support and body armor, just to make some kind of Oorah! point.

And they wonder. How does this tally with what I grew up with? How is this right if it would be wrong at home? Why am I doing what I was taught not to do? Why is my country saying one thing and doing another? And, am I the only one that sees this?

And then when they come home we say, “Let’s not talk about the bad stuff” when it is the “bad stuff” that has them tied in knots. What we are really doing when we leave part of the discussion off-limits is we are protecting ourselves from even contemplating our culpability in their pain.

We say that if we talk about the dark parts of a soldier’s history we are just increasing their pain. The truth is, if you can’t deal with the morality and ethics of a particular war, and if you can’t contemplate the dark stuff, you can’t deal with at least half of most soldier’s pain.

We sit self-satisfied that we didn’t want this war, therefore we are innocent of wrong-doing and we won’t talk about it, “because it was war-by-choice thus immoral and unethical and we are ever-so-righteous so we just won’t discuss it, thank you very much.”

We say that we can’t talk truth about war because if we do and have to say that it is immoral, many soldiers’ families will immediately respond that we are disdaining their loved one’s service, their injuries, and their deaths. In fact, it is only when we are open to discussing the total issue – not just the fact of war, but its reality, its morality and its ethics, and most especially its personal aftermath – that we sanctify their service, which was given patriotically, freely, and selflessly, and deserves all the honor we can muster.

It is only when we face the entire issue of war – all of it including the horrible parts – that we exonerate them for doing our nasty work for us while we sit at home and plot to eliminate them from our conscience, and often to eliminate them from their benefits. Even their employer, the DoD now wants them to pay more for their medical benefits, get less for their GI Bill, and still go back again next year. The VA, of course, denies that most of them are sick or injured at all.

So we citizens must face the death, the wounding, the dismemberment. We must face the loss of someone’s child – American, Iraqi, Afghani. We must face the destruction. We must face the lost opportunities for the soldiers, their families, their communities, our nation, and even of their opponents.

And most of all we must face the fact that when they come home – our brave and often forgotten soldiers – they need for us to step up. We will never undo what we have done to them, but we can listen, understand, and not judge them by some standard of “normal”. They left us as normal, but we took their normality away from them. We can’t give it back, but at least we can ‘fess up to what we have done.

So there is no PTS disorder when it comes to our soldiers. We must call it what it is. There is wounding – visible or not – and it needs to be understood and accommodated, because we cannot heal soldiers’ heart, no matter how hard we try – but we must try.

Only then will they truly be home.

War, we have come to believe, is a spectator sport. The military and the press ... have turned war into a vast video arcade game. It’s very essence – death – is hidden from public view."

Chris Hedges

Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter ,New York Times

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. United States Court of appeals for Veterans Claims “Public List of Practitioners” are members of the court’s bar www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/. Also this site for west coasters <http://www.chapman.edu/law/programs/clinics/amvets.asp>.

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!

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

VCS - VUFT LAWSUIT UPDATE:

Class Action Suit: The appeal was filed in December and now the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ordered us to an Assessment Conference to determine if the case should be included in the court’s Mediation Program. Our appeal goes on, even though we hope that the new administration will address the focus of our case directly and with vigor.

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/9th 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

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 or the Vice Chair at scook@vuft.org. Watch for details at www.vuft.org.

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

A RESPONSE TO OUR APPEAL ON THE WEST LA VETS CENTER

I was once a patient at the West LA VA hospital. The people there saved my life! Without them I would not be writing this today. I no longer live in southern California but I know in my own mind that if I were still living there I would be actively engaged in trying to save the VA property. There are many veterans that are homeless in the Los Angeles area who could make use of the buildings and facilities on that campus to get affordable housing and other assistance in turning their lives around. I wish you all the luck in the world in trying to convince the DVA to do the right thing.

Good Luck - David A. Comb

PTSD: WE ARE ALL PART OF THE "CURE"

My wife, Cynthia, is writing a book for the loved ones of people with PTSD that will be released in the spring of 2010, and she would love input. The book will weave throughout it anecdotes and examples gathered from trauma survivors and those affected by a loved one's trauma to illustrate how some families deal with the challenges inherent in this disorder. The focus will be on self-care, and it will also contain advice from mental health professionals and other experts in the field of PTSD.

She's written extensively about PTSD and co-occurring disorders, prevention and recovery (I gave her plenty first-hand learning opportunities over our 36-year marriage). She has developed three questionnaires 1) for trauma survivors, 2) for the loved ones of those who suffer (or suffered) from PTSD, and 3) for experts who work with trauma survivors and/or those who are affected by a loved one's trauma or PTSD. Those interested in completing or forwarding a questionnaire should respond to Cynthia at: cynthiaorange@mac.com

Thank you. Peace - Michael Orange - *Michael Orange is a member of the VetSpeak.org Blog Squad*

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

HOUSE PASSES HISTORIC BILL TO SECURE TIMELY FUNDING FOR VETS' HEALTH CARE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 24 June 2009

Washington, D.C. – On Tuesday, June 23, 2009, the House of Representatives approved H.R. 1016, landmark legislation to secure timely funding for veterans' health care delivered through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Bob Filner (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, announced passage of the bill that would authorize the 'advance appropriations' process. The bill provides Congress greater ability to develop appropriation bills that provide sufficient funding to meet the best estimate of anticipated demand for VA health care services in future years by allowing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical accounts one year in advance.

<More at: <http://www.vawatchdog.org/09/hcva09/hcva062409-1.htm>>

HOUSE VOTES TO IMPROVE CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – On Tuesday, June 23, 2009, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Bob Filner (D-CA) announced that the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1211, a bill to expand and improve health care services available to women veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act, introduced by Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD), addresses the needs of the 1.8 million women who have served in the military. H.R. 1211 would especially focus on the health care needs of those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The bill requires the VA to provide medical care for newborn children of women veterans, establish a pilot program for child care services, and enhance programs available to veterans suffering from military sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, the VA would be required to conduct a comprehensive study on barriers encountered by women veterans when attempting to access the VA health care system. <More at: <http://www.vawatchdog.org/09/hcva09/hcva062409-2.htm>>

VETERANS COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT LEGISLATION SENT TO WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following unanimous approval by the House and Senate, Congress is sending S. 407, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009 to the White House. If approved by President Barack Obama, S. 407 would protect the value of compensation for veterans and their survivors from potential inflation.

"Millions of disabled veterans and their survivors rely on monthly compensation, and the value of their payments should be protected from potential inflation," said Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), author of the bill. The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to measure inflation. In the event that the CPI increases, S. 407 would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase, as of December 1, 2009, the rates of:

- Veterans' disability compensation,
- Dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children, and
- Additional related benefits.

The cost of living adjustment (COLA) is designed to offset inflation. If the CPI increases, COLA for the above-mentioned benefits would match the annual increase provided to Social Security recipients. This year's COLA rate has not been

determined, and some predict that the CPI will decrease this year. In the event of a decrease in the CPI, veteran and survivor compensation will remain at last year's rate.

For more information on the Consumer Price Index, visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics' website, www.bls.gov/cpi.
<http://www.vawatchdog.org/09/scva09/scva062409-1.htm>

HOUSE APPROPRIATORS APPROVE INCREASES FOR VETERANS' PROGRAMS

June 16, 2009

A House Appropriations subcommittee Tuesday approved a \$132.3 billion spending bill for the Veterans Affairs Department, military construction projects and other programs in fiscal 2010.

Of that amount, about \$78 billion would be discretionary spending, nearly 7 percent more than in fiscal 2009 and \$239 million more than requested by the White House. The Military Construction-Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee approved the bill by voice vote.

Approximately \$109 billion of the overall total would go to the Veterans Affairs Department, 15 percent more than the amount appropriated for fiscal 2009 and equal to President Obama's budget request.

The Veterans Benefits Administration, which pays out financial assistance, would receive a total of \$56 billion, about 19 percent more than it received in fiscal 2009 and the same level as the president's request.

<More at: <http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5&docID=cqmidday-000003144863>>

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEWS CLAIMS PROCESS FOR VETERANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 23, 2009

Washington, D.C. – On Thursday, June 18, 2009, the House Veterans' Affairs Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, led by Chairman John Hall (D-NY), conducted a hearing to address concerns regarding the growing backlog at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and to explore the manner in which VBA has begun implementing new laws designed to improve the disability claims processing system for veterans.

Chairman Hall offered the following comments during his opening statement: "Members of this Subcommittee convene today to conduct a hearing on the record number of claims facing the VA, now approaching one million. This is a problem that has plagued the VA and the veterans it is intended to serve for years. Veterans applying for the very benefits they have earned through sacrifice for our country have been stuck languishing in a growing backlog. Many veterans have been waiting months and years – and in some mind boggling cases, even decades for finality in their disability claims. Is this how America fulfills its promise to our veterans? When men and women sign up to put on the uniform and defend our country, they sign a contract. We need to make sure that America is living up to our part of that contract. We must have a VA that is an advocate for veterans not an obstacle, a VA that smoothes the way, not puts up roadblocks."

<More at: <http://www.vawatchdog.org/09/hcva09/hcva062309-1.htm>>

THIS ONE GOT PASSED IN A TIMELY FASHION – AREN'T YOU THANKFUL THAT THEY KEEP THEIR ATTENTION ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

SENATE PASSES BOXER-FEINSTEIN RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING LOS ANGELES LAKERS ON WINNING 2009 NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

Washington, DC— The U.S. Senate Wednesday passed a resolution introduced by U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (both D-CA) congratulating the Los Angeles Lakers on winning the 2009 National Basketball Association (NBA) Championship.

RETREAT – NEWS

GLOBAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE SET NEW RECORD IN 2008, SAYS SIPRI

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute - 8 June 2009

Worldwide military expenditure in 2008 totaled an estimated US\$1,464 billion, according to new figures released today by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). This represents an increase of 4 per cent in real terms compared to 2007, and an increase of 45 per cent since 1999. SIPRI today launched the 2009 edition of its [Yearbook on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security](#).

The Yearbook shows that the USA accounted for the majority (58%) of the global increase between 1999 and 2008, with its military spending growing by \$219 billion in constant 2005 prices over the period. Even so, it was far from the only country to

pursue such a course. China and Russia, with absolute increases of \$42 billion and \$24 billion respectively, both nearly tripled their military expenditure over the decade. Other regional powers—particularly India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, Brazil, South Korea, Algeria and the UK—also made substantial contributions to the total increase. ... The top 10 military spenders:

Rank	Country	2008 spending (\$ b.)	Rank	Country	2008 spending (\$ b.)
1	USA	607	6	Germany	46.8
2	China	84.9*	7	Japan	46.3
3	France	65.7	8	Italy	40.6
4	UK	65.3	9	Saudi Arabia	38.2
5	Russia	58.6*	10	India	30.0

<More at: http://www.sipri.org/media/media/pressreleases/8june_yearbook_launch>

TALIBAN AVERTS ATTACKS WITH U.S. EQUIPMENT

Eli Lake - June 22, 2009

Some Taliban fighters have been able to ward off attacks by U.S. aircraft by wearing special infrared patches on their shirts that signal that they are friends rather than foes. The patches, which can also help suicide bombers get close to U.S. targets, are supposed to be the property of the U.S. government alone, but can be easily purchased over the Internet for about \$10 each. Also available online: night-vision goggles and military-grade communications systems like the ones used by the terrorists who attacked the Indian city of Mumbai last year. <More at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jun/22/taliban-averts-attacks-with-us-equipment/>>

FOREIGN FIGHTERS FLOOD IN TO JOIN AFGHANISTAN'S ARAB INSURGENTS

Tom Coghlan: Kabul - The Times - June 17, 2009

The al-Qaeda network is recruiting an increasing number of foreign fighters to mount a "counter surge" against Western troops arriving in time for the August elections in Afghanistan.

Uzbeks and European Turks are particularly prominent among foreign fighters joining significant numbers of Arab recruits to fight alongside the Taleban, according to Western officials and sources in the Afghan insurgency.

There are even reports of British Muslims on the battlefield, with one dead Taleban fighter in Helmand found recently sporting an Aston Villa football club tattoo. There have long been reports of English-speaking voices with identifiable British regional accents being monitored by military eavesdroppers in the province. <More at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6514933.ece>>

NAVY ADMIRAL WANTS DO-GOOD BATTLEGROUPS

David Axe - June 17, 2009

For decades, the U.S. Navy has been built around its carrier battlegroups and amphibious ready groups: huge clusters of heavily armed warships, tailored for delivering massive firepower, in the form of airplanes or Marines. But for today's "hybrid" wars, where winning over local populations is as important as killing the bad guys, these traditional naval groups aren't necessarily the best things.

One top Navy admiral has proposed adding a third type of group, for "hearts and minds" missions. Adm. James Stavridis, most recently top dog in Latin America's Southern Command, is on his way to take over European Command, and the post of NATO Supreme Commander. He has proposed new, Navy "Humanitarian Service Groups," specifically for Latin America.

The idea is that instead of having a group of ships centered on an aircraft carrier, whose primary mission is to launch strikes on shore, we ought to have groups of ships that have as primary functions training, providing humanitarian disaster relief, and U.S. smart power in Latin America supporting humanitarian projects.

<More at: <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/06/navy-admiral-wants-do-good-battlegroups/>>

HERE'S A WHOLE RAFT OF RECRUITING STORIES

JUDGE NIXES RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARY RECRUITERS

Annie Youderian - 19 June 2009

(CN) - A federal judge in Oakland, Calif., struck down nearly identical ordinances in Arcata and Eureka that ban military recruiters from trying to recruit city residents under the age of 18. U.S. District Judge Sandra Brown Armstrong said the 2008 ordinances violate the Supremacy Clause.

<More at: http://www.courthousenews.com/2009/06/19/Judge_Nixes_Restrictions_on_Military_Recruiters.htm>

NEO-NAZIS ARE IN THE ARMY NOW

Matt Kennard - Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute - June 17, 2009

On a muggy Florida evening in 2008, I meet Iraq War veteran Forrest Fogarty in the Winghouse, a little bar-restaurant on the outskirts of Tampa, his favorite hangout. He told me on the phone I would recognize him by his skinhead. Sure enough, when I spot a white guy at a table by the door with a shaved head, white tank top and bulging muscles, I know it can only be him.

Over a plate of chicken wings, he tells me about his path into the white-power movement. "I was 14 when I decided I wanted to be a Nazi," he says. At his first high school, near Los Angeles, he was bullied by black and Latino kids. That's when he first heard Skrewdriver, a band he calls "the godfather of the white power movement." "I became obsessed," he says. He had an image from one of Skrewdriver's album covers -- a Viking carrying a staff, an icon among white nationalists -- tattooed on his left forearm. Soon after he had a Celtic cross, an Irish symbol appropriated by neo-Nazis, emblazoned on his stomach.

At 15, Fogarty moved with his dad to Tampa, where he started picking fights with groups of black kids at his new high school. "On the first day, this bunch of niggers, they thought I was a racist, so they asked, 'Are you in the KKK?'" he tells me. "I said, 'Yeah,' and it was on." Soon enough, he was expelled.

For the next six years, Fogarty flitted from landscaping job to construction job, neither of which he'd ever wanted to do. "I was just drinking and fighting," he says. He started his own Nazi rock group, Attack, and made friends in the National Alliance, at the time the biggest neo-Nazi group in the country. It has called for a "a long-term eugenics program involving at least the entire populations of Europe and America."

But the military ran in Fogarty's family. His grandfather had served during World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and his dad had been a Marine in Vietnam. At 22, Fogarty resolved to follow in their footsteps. "I wanted to serve my country," he says.

Army regulations prohibit soldiers from participating in racist groups, and recruiters are instructed to keep an eye out for suspicious tattoos. Before signing on the dotted line, enlistees are required to explain any tattoos. At a Tampa recruitment office, though, Fogarty sailed right through the signup process. "They just told me to write an explanation of each tattoo, and I made up some stuff, and that was that," he says. Soon he was posted to Fort Stewart in Georgia, where he became part of the 3rd Infantry Division. <More at: http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/06/15/neo_nazis_army/>

ARMY MORE SELECTIVE AS ECONOMY LAGS

Ann Scott Tyson - Washington Post Staff Writer - April 19, 2009

The Army last month stopped accepting felons and recent drug abusers into its ranks as the nation's economic downturn helped its recruiting, allowing it to reverse a decline in recruiting standards that had alarmed some officers.

While shunning those with criminal backgrounds, the Army is also attracting better-educated recruits. It is on track this year to meet, for the first time since 2004, the Pentagon's goal of ensuring that 90 percent of recruits have high school diplomas.

The developments mark a welcome turnaround for the Army, which has the military's biggest annual recruiting quota and had in recent years issued more waivers for recruits with criminal records. That, coupled with unprecedented strains from repeated deployments, led some senior officers to voice concerns that wartime pressures threatened to break the all-volunteer force.

Now, though, rising unemployment, security gains in Iraq and other factors have helped make military service more attractive and have allowed recruiters to be more choosy, according to military officials and Pentagon data.

<More at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/18/AR2009041801992.html>>

NOTE: IN 2008 THE ARMY RECRUITED 4,200 CONVICTED FELONS

OLDER RECRUITS CHALLENGE ARMY AND VICE VERSA

James Dao - NY Times - June 18, 2009

FORT SILL, Okla. - Pfc. Shane Dixon is known as Old Dix. Specialist Jason Ness goes by Gramps. Pfc. Christopher Batson's nom de boot camp is Pops. None of them are over 40, but to the 18-year-old soldiers in basic training here, they are as ancient as a first generation Xbox. Yet in the three years since the Army raised its age limit for enlisting to 42, from 35, a steady stream of older recruits has joined the ranks, pushing creaky muscles through road training, learning to appreciate - or at least endure - Army chow and in some cases deploying to combat zones. And while the number of such recruits, more than 3,800, is small by Army standards, the pace of over-35 enlistment jumped sharply in the first months of this year. <More at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/18/us/18recruit.html>>

OLD GUNS GIVE ALL IN THE NEW WAR

Bryan Mitchell - Military.com - June 19, 2009

Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California and The Beatles owned the airwaves when Maj. Steven Hutchison first joined the Army. Much has changed since 1966, but Hutchison's love of country and dedication to service wavered little in the 43 years since he first enlisted. Last month, the 60-year-old officer became the oldest American to die as a result of combat operations in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

And Wednesday, while tens of thousands of vigorous 20-somethings patrolled the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan, 52-year-old Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Dupont passed away at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio from wounds suffered months earlier on an Afghan battlefield.

While their high school classmates retire to golf courses and full-time grandparenting, a new wave of soldiers over 50 is demonstrating that for some age truly is a state of mind. And some, like Hutchison and Dupont, are paying the ultimate price for their service.

The three-year-old change of policy that upped the initial enlistment age from 35 to 42 certainly contributed to an increase in the number of older soldiers serving on the front lines. There are currently 3,954 Soldiers 50 and over serving in support of Operations Iraqi or Enduring Freedom, including 51 that are 60 or older, according to Army spokesman Lt. Col. Les Melnyk. Since Sept. 11, 2001, of the 1.9 million troops who have deployed, 39,386 have been 50 or older with 543 deploying at 60 years old or older. There have been 35 soldiers killed who were 50 or older serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

<More at: <http://www.military.com/news/article/June-2009/old-guns-give-all-in-the-new-war.html>>

CONGRESS STUFFS WAR-FUNDING BILL WITH CASH FOR OTHER ITEMS

David Lightman - Jun. 22, 2009

WASHINGTON — The emergency war funding bill that President Barack Obama is expected to sign soon has mushroomed into a catch-all for many lawmakers' favorite projects.

Obama originally sought \$83.5 billion in April, mostly to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the time Congress rewrote the bill and passed it last week, the price had jumped to \$105.9 billion.

That included money for a new \$1 billion "cash for clunkers" auto trade-in program, \$2.1 billion for eight C-17 Globemaster aircraft, \$5 billion to help the International Monetary Fund and \$500 million in earmarks, mostly for Mississippi.

<More at: <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/227/story/70488.html>>

COSTS COULD FORCE TROOP CUTS

Christian Lowe - Military.com - June 25, 2009

The powerful chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's defense panel said Wednesday that the services are likely to have to shed personnel starting in 2013, given the increasing costs of equipment and other programs the Pentagon needs to win future fights.

Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., told reporters at a wide-ranging breakfast meeting in Washington that the Army's chief of staff, Gen. George Casey, and Pentagon chief Robert Gates wanted to increase end strength for two years to stabilize a force stretched by frequent deployments with little time home for training and family life.

He said the two-year reprieve would be needed to eliminate the practice of "stop-loss," in which service members are kept in the military beyond their contracted enlistment.

"Personnel costs are so high we have to cut back on personnel. You can't cut the budget anyplace else," Murtha said. "We've got to cut back on personnel, and at some point we will." <More at: <http://www.military.com/news/article/costs-could-force-troop-cuts.html>>

WE ALWAYS HAVE ROOM FOR ONE OF THESE "SUPPORT THE TROOPS" STORIES

SOLDIER SUING AFTER BEING STRIPPED OF SUBWAY RESTAURANT FRANCHISES

Karen Robinson-Jacobs - The Dallas Morning News June 21, 2009

While serving in Afghanistan with the U.S. Army Reserve, Leon Batie Jr. dodged roadside bombs and scrambled to safety when rockets pierced the night sky. When he returned to Dallas in early 2006, another battle loomed.

As Batie was returning from Afghanistan, he learned he was being stripped of the two Subway restaurants he bought before mobilizing. **The stores were sold to Subway insiders, with one transaction yielding a Subway executive a \$100,000 profit,** according to a lawsuit Batie filed last year in state court in Dallas County. One issue in the case is set for trial this week.

The suit, which alleges violations of the U.S. Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, seeks more than \$6 million from the Subway affiliate that controls leases. <More at: http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/bus/stories/DN-franvet_21bus.ART0.State.Edition1.3bfb0e4.html>

TO THE COLORS - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Notes
6/27		Lauderhill, FL	Resource Fair	Gerald Peterkin	954-792-4000 x-231
7/9	1730	Marines' Memorial Theater, 2nd Floor, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco	George P. Schulz Lecture Series – GEN David Petraeus	World Affairs Council of Northern California	\$10 members \$25 non-members
7/22	1100-1400	Radisson Martinique On Broadway 49 West 32nd Street, New York, NY	New York Career Fair		Register
7/2-7/5		901 W. Brasher Rd. Roswell, NM	Wall that Heals	Church on the Move	
7/9-7/12		Wheeler Park Flagstaff., AZ	Wall that Heals	The American Legion Riders	
7/24-7/27		Ventura, CA	Stand Down	Claire L. Hope	805-987-3118
7/27-8/2		Galt House Hotel, 140 N Fourth St Louisville, KY 40202	Vietnam Veterans of America Biennial Convention	VVA	
7/30-8/3		Angela Center Santa Rosa, CA	Retreat for OIF/OEF Veterans and their families	Coming Home Project	Free of charge Apply

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

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

NUMBER OF VA CLAIMS POISED TO HIT 1 MILLION

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - June 18, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) -- This isn't the same as getting a free duffel bag for being the millionth person to go through the turnstiles: The Veterans Affairs Department appears poised to have hit the 1 million milestone on claims it still hasn't processed. This unwelcome marker approaches as the agency scrambles to hire and train new claims processors, which can take two years. <More at: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iDTMfc36iJeT3Ld-G20KEuRPLyhwD98SUIHQ0>>

THEY FINALLY FIGURED OUT THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM OUT THERE, SO NOW THEY ARE GOING TO STUDY IT

PHILADELPHIA VA TABBED AS NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

Associated Press - June 23, 2009

PHILADELPHIA - A new federal agency dedicated to eliminating homelessness among veterans has been established in Philadelphia. The National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans plans to provide data, research and analysis to policymakers in hopes of ending the problem within five years. <More at: <http://www.startribune.com/nation/48875892.html>>

VA MEDICAL SYSTEM IN SHAMBLES, VETERANS GROUPS SAY

Joseph Abrams - FOXNews.com - June 24, 2009

Amid growing controversy over procedures that exposed 10,000 veterans to the AIDS and hepatitis viruses, the Department of Veterans Affairs is now bracing against news that one of its facilities in Pennsylvania gave botched radiation treatments to nearly 100 cancer patients. Veterans groups and lawmakers say VA hospitals have permitted these violations because federal regulations allow doctors to work with little outside scrutiny. They say the VA health system, with its under-funded hospitals and overworked doctors, is showing signs of an "institutional breakdown," in the words of one congressman.

<More at: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/06/24/va-medical-shambles-veterans-groups-say/>>

REPORT CONFIRMS VA ENDOSCOPE PROBLEM IS DEPARTMENT-WIDE

June 16, 2009

Washington, D.C. — Today, a disturbing report reveals that, despite earlier outrage on the issue, continued medical procedure failures at numerous Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities may have exposed veterans to infectious diseases.

... . Forty-two randomly selected VA facilities were visited to ensure employees are familiar with, and adherent to, proper equipment cleaning and reprocessing procedures. Twenty-two of the forty-two sites' employees failed to illustrate proper knowledge and procedural compliance. <More at: <http://republicans.veterans.house.gov/news/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=1778>>

AT V.A. HOSPITAL, A ROGUE CANCER UNIT

Walt Bogdanich - June 21, 2009

For patients with prostate cancer, it is a common surgical procedure: a doctor implants dozens of radioactive seeds to attack the disease. But when Dr. Gary D. Kao treated one patient at the veterans' hospital in Philadelphia, his aim was more than a little off. Most of the seeds, 40 in all, landed in the patient's healthy bladder, not the prostate.

It was a serious mistake, and under federal rules, regulators investigated. But Dr. Kao, with their consent, made his mistake all but disappear. He simply rewrote his surgical plan to match the number of seeds in the prostate, investigators said.

The revision may have made Dr. Kao look better, but it did nothing for the patient, who had to undergo a second implant. It failed, too, resulting in an unintended dose to the rectum. Regulators knew nothing of this second mistake because no one reported it. Two years later, in 2005, Dr. Kao rewrote another surgical plan after putting half the seeds in the wrong organ. Once again, regulators did not object. <More at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/21/health/21radiation.html>>

COURT STIFFS VETERANS CAUGHT IN PRIVACY BREACH

David Kravets - June 18, 2009 |

Veterans suffering anxiety and paranoia following the theft of a government hard drive containing the medical histories and Social Security numbers of 198,000 of their brethren cannot recover financial damages, a federal appeals court says. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in largely dismissing a class-action, ruled Wednesday that the veterans could recoup at least \$1,000 under the Privacy Act if they could show financial damages, not mental anguish.

What's more, the Atlanta-based court noted that the veterans — some already suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome from their Vietnam War days — likely could recover damages for mental anguish associated with the data breach if the lawsuit was before a different court. That's because the courts of appeal across the nation have issued conflicting interpretations of the Privacy Act of 1974, which allows people to sue the government for privacy breaches and recover "actual damages." Precedent in the 11th Circuit, which includes Alabama, Florida and Georgia, interprets "actual damages" as money losses only.

So 198,000 veterans — whose life history was on a hard drive that vanished from a Birmingham, Alabama Veterans Administration hospital — are out of luck, even if their war-time paranoia was exacerbated by the breach.

<More at: <http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2009/06/courts-differ-on-privacy-acts-meaning/>>

VA'S SUICIDE PREVENTION MESSAGE CARRIED ON 21,000 BUSES

WASHINGTON (June 19, 2009) –

The telephone number for the suicide prevention "lifeline" of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) **1 800-273-TALK** is now being carried on more than 21,000 city buses in 124 communities across the United States and will run until Sept. 1, 2009. <More at: http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/>

VA LAUNCHES 10-YEAR HEALTH STUDY OF 60,000 NEW VETERANS

Jun 22, 2009, 4:43 p.m. EST

WASHINGTON, June 22, 2009 /PRNewswire-USNewswire via COMTEX/ -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has initiated a large, long-term study to look carefully at a broad array of health issues that may affect Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans and their counterparts who served during the same time period. VA's "National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans" will begin with 30,000 Veterans deployed to OEF/OIF and 30,000 comparison Veterans who were not deployed. <More at: http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/docs/study_10year.pdf>

RULE CHANGES WILL GIVE 265,000 VETERANS FREE HEALTH CARE

Leo Shane III - Stars and Stripes - Mideast edition - June 16, 2009

... Veterans Affairs officials plan to add more than 266,000 veterans to the health care program by October 2010, part of a new effort by the White House to expand coverage to those left out of the system in recent years. The eligibility changes apply only to veterans in the department's lowest priority ranking, Priority 8: Those are veterans without any service-connected disabilities and who make more than \$29,000 annually. To use the VA eligibility calculator, visit www.va.gov/healtheligibility.

<More at: <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=63322>>

VA BOOSTS TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS, SHARPLY REDUCES DEDUCTIBLES FOR VETS

11 June

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Adhering to Congressional mandate, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced improvements to its beneficiary travel program for veterans who must travel for VA health care. The VA increased the mileage reimbursement rate by 13 cents a mile and cut deductibles by more than half. The improvements were mandated in legislation introduced by Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) that was included in S. 2162, the [Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008](#), now Public Law (PL) 110-387.

... the deductibles for one-way and roundtrip travel will be set as follows: \$3 for each one-way trip (from \$7.77), and \$6 per round trip (from \$15.54). In addition, the monthly cap has been reduced to \$18 (from \$46.62). PL 110-387 also authorized VA to raise the veterans' mileage reimbursements above the rate given to federal employees when using their own vehicles, while setting that rate as a minimum. <More at: <http://www.vawatchdog.org/08/scva08/scva111808-1.htm>>

I GUESS THE MAGIC WENT OUT OF "OUT-SOURCING"

DFAS RETIRED & ANNUITANT PAY TO RETURN TO GOVERNMENT-RUN FUNCTION

Army Echoes – May-Aug 2009

ARLINGTON, VA - DFAS officials announced that they will transition DoD Retired and Annuitant (R&A) pay functions to a government-run operation performed by DoD civilian workers in early 2010. Currently, this worked is performed by a contractor.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Sect. 324) directed DoD to consider using DoD civilian employees to perform functions performed by contractors and to give special consideration to in-sourcing functions that have been performed by DoD civilian employees any time in the past 10 years. The DFAS R&A pay function switched from government to contractor in January 2002.

DFAS conducted a Business Case Analysis to determine if R&A pay should be in-sourced. DFAS Director Terri McKay explained the benefits of in-sourcing, "The study showed bringing this work back in-house would result in savings of more than \$20 million over the next 10 years, provide improved flexibility and reduce risks to operations, and finally would allow us to sustain and potentially improve service delivery and customer satisfaction."

http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/docs/echoes/09_aug.pdf>

WAIT A MINUTE! DIDN'T WE JUST HEAR THAT IN-SOURCING SAVES MONEY?

PRIVATIZATION OF U.S. ARMY LODGING TO RAISE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SOLDIERS ON THE MOVE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE - No. 422-09 - June 15, 2009

The U.S. Army today announced that it will transfer the first 10 installations under the Army's Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL) program on August 15, 2009. The transfer is a reinforcement of the U.S. Army's commitment to improving its transient lodging to enhance the quality of life of soldiers and their families.

Actus Lend Lease will perform the redevelopment of the lodging facilities and lodging operations will be assumed by the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). <More at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12746>>

MILITARY SPOUSES SEEK RESIDENCY BENEFITS

Kimberly Hefling - Associated Press Writer - June 8, 2009

SPRINGFIELD, Va. --... About 800,000 service members move each year -- nearly half during the summer. Moving is a ritual repeated nearly every three years on average for military families.

It's also one that ... military spouses say could be made easier.

They are asking Congress to let military spouses opt to claim the same state of residence as their wives or husbands, who are allowed by law to keep their original residency as they relocate.

Having that option, the spouses say, would prevent many hassles associated with every move, such as obtaining a new driver's license and reregistering to vote. In some cases, it would eliminate the need for couples to file separate tax returns and lower the income taxes that some spouses pay. <More at:

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/06/08/military_spouses_seek_residency_benefits/

WHILE SOLDIER FIGHTS FOR HIS COUNTRY, HIS WIFE STRUGGLES TO STAY IN THE U.S.

Leo Shane III - Stars and Stripes Mideast edition - June 25, 2009

WASHINGTON - Spc. Moonsammy Narinesammy isn't worried about dying in Iraq. He's worried about spending the rest of his life in Guyana.

Narinesammy, 31, who has months left on his deployment, spends all of his free time between missions trying to solve his wife's citizenship problems. Immigration and Naturalization Services officials are finalizing deportation paperwork for Ratashwarie, while she waits nervously in New York. <More at: <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=63450>>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2009

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2,290 DAYS)

KILLED US	4,314
WOUNDED US [6/6/09]	31,342
OTHER US CASUALTIES [6/6/09]	≥37,512
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [6/6/09]	185
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 [6/25/09]	≥ 100,868 - 668,051
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS [11/9/08]	≥ 400K – 1.374M
IRAQ REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	2.1M/2.5M

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2,819 DAYS)

KILLED US	712
WOUNDED US [6/6/09]	2,979
OTHER CASUALTIES US [5/2/09]	8,034
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [5/2/09]	32
KILLED COALITION	474
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2/07)	1,602
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY [1/25/09]	≥ 11,017
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (2/24/2009)	≥ 7,373
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	\$681,438,039,887
COST OF AFGHAN WAR TO DATE	\$190,781,549,674

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

CHAPLAIN DIES FROM 2004 IRAQ WAR INJURIES

Scott Fontaine - The News Tribune - June 23rd, 2009

A Catholic priest who was critically injured while deployed with his Fort Lewis unit died Saturday, more than five years after his Humvee struck a roadside bomb in Iraq. The Rev. Tim Vakoc becomes the first chaplain to die of wounds sustained during the war in Iraq. The former major from Minnesota – known to most as Father Tim – suffered brain damage and lost an eye from the May 30, 2004, attack. He had most recently lived at a nursing home in New Hope, Minn. <More at: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/topstories/story/787154.html>

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACTIVATED AS OF JUNE 23, 2009

This week the Navy and Air Force announced an increase, while the Army, Marine Corps and Coast Guard announced a decrease. The net collective result is 341 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 110,364; Navy Reserve, 7,027; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 15,645; Marine Corps Reserve, 8,787; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 739. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 142,562, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun%202009/d20090623nqr.pdf>.

AFTERTHOUGHTS ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

ALCOHOL ABUSE BY GIS SOARS SINCE '03

Gregg Zoroya - USA TODAY - 18 June 2009

The rate of Army soldiers enrolled in treatment programs for alcohol dependency or abuse has nearly doubled since 2003 — a sign of the growing stress of repeated deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Army statistics and interviews.

Soldiers diagnosed by Army substance abuse counselors with alcoholism or alcohol abuse, such as binge drinking, increased from 6.1 per 1,000 soldiers in 2003 to an estimated 11.4 as of March 31. <More at:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-06-18-army-alcohol-problems_N.htm>

ADD-ON ~ STUFF OF INTEREST

MORE GI BILL INFO

DOD ANNOUNCES TRANSFERABILITY OPTIONS FOR “POST 9/11 GI BILL”

June 23, 2009

The Defense Department announced today its policy for transferring educational benefits to the spouses and children of service members under the “Post 9/11 GI Bill,” which takes effect Aug. 1, 2009.

... Career service members on active duty or in the selected reserve on Aug. 1, 2009, and who are eligible for the “Post 9/11 GI Bill,” may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their education entitlement to one or more family members. To be eligible, service members must have served in the Armed Forces for at least six years, and agree to serve four additional years, from the date of election to transfer.

<More at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12762>>

TWO REPORTS OF INTEREST

Ford Foundation Agent Orange Report: 1 June 2009

[http://www.vva.org/Committees/AgentOrange/Understanding_the_Impact_40_Years_Later\(US_Viet_Vets_and_AO\)-06-01-2009.pdf](http://www.vva.org/Committees/AgentOrange/Understanding_the_Impact_40_Years_Later(US_Viet_Vets_and_AO)-06-01-2009.pdf)

VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses November 2008

http://sph.bu.edu/insider/images/stories/resources/annual_reports/GWI%20and%20Health%20of%20GW%20Veterans_RAC-GWVI%20Report_2008.pdf

ADDITIONS TO OUR READING LIST

We have added the following books and two new categories to our recommended reading list:

War Journal: My Five Years in Iraq, Richard Engel. *NBC News's award-winning Middle East Bureau Chief, Richard Engel, offers an unvarnished and often emotional account of five years in Iraq.*

Veterans' Families' Narratives

In Harm's Way: The Returning Veteran, Jane Smith Thornton. *Partly a memoir and partly a primer on fighting your way through the system.*

"Real" War Fiction

The Things They Carried; Tim O'Brien. Neither memoir nor novel nor collection of short stories but rather an artful combination of all three, yielding a work of fiction that is remarkable for its depiction of the realities of the Vietnam war at its most basic level.

NOTICE

If at any time you cannot open a link in this newsletter to an article or web page that interests you, please let me know at scook@vuft; I keep a copy of most of the full articles, or can research an alternative route to the information. [Ed.]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: I have been asked what guides my selection of articles. In general, I try to stick with articles that deal exclusively with our target group: serving military, veterans, retirees, and their families. I also favor articles that deal with the effect of Legislative or Executive inaction or bad actions that adversely affect our target group. I try not to pick those articles that have already been beaten to death in the regular press, but rather try to bring the reader articles that he or she might not run across in another medium. While we are non-partisan, I do not believe articles critical of government actions to be partisan as long as they are accurate and fair. Criticism, like dissent, is fair. Finally, I screen hundreds of articles for inclusions and for every article I include, I throw five or six away – good articles, but not as important as the ones selected.

I always appreciate contributions, whether it is opinion in Letter-to-the-Editor form, or articles that the reader believes would be good for our readership. Since I get a chance to vent once in awhile in these newsletters, I will certainly consider Op-Ed copy for inclusion. I always welcome reader comment or complaint. [Sandy Cook](#), Editor

If you need to call us, our number is 1.805.530.6417.

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