

# SOUND OFF!



VOL. I, NO 23

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

*“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”*

25 JUNE 2006

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

### COBRA II

In a departure from the norm, I want to devote the editorial space in this issue to a book report. I haven't written one of these in decades, but there is a new book that demands it.

**Cobra II** is the book by Mike Gordon, New York Times military correspondent, and retired marine [Lt. Gen Bernie Trainor](#), who retired as DCS Plans, Policies and Operations of the JCS.

If you read no other book on the Iraq War, this 500-page page-turner is the one you must read. The authors don't discuss the decision to go to war, so it doesn't matter what your opinion on that subject is.

What they do discuss in exquisitely referenced detail is the planning and implementation of the war. The first 175 pages discuss the lead up to the war, the next 290 the conduct of the war on the ground, and the last 140 the aftermath and the consequences, mostly bad, of decisions made and un-made in the first two phases. The maps are inadequate, so I have included one at the end of this issue that has enough detail to follow the story.

The heroes of the piece are not the Generals you have heard of, rather they are the ones who tried to make the best of an increasingly difficult situation and the, Colonels and the Lt. Colonels who commanded the brigades and battalions.

Long before the war began or was even contemplated by the administration, Gen Zinni had put in place a contingency plan for that area of the world. In developing that plan, he and his staff had become experts on the region. The plan called for up to 450,000 troops, not including Iraqis who would also serve.

Long before the war began, the US Army, most recently under Gen Shinseki, had been transforming itself into a lighter and more capable force, yet, its plans for a battle in that part of the world still called for 360,000 troops minimum, not so much to win the war, but to sustain the peace.

Both of these plans called for that many troops, and for the reconstitution of the Iraqi Army and Police Force in order to provide security and quality of life to the Iraqi people in the first moments after the war.

OSECDEF adopted the “transformation” title, but redefined it as a mostly high-tech, light infantry and armored cavalry charge up the middle – go, kick-ass, and leave within weeks. Worst of all it became an operational ideology not a plan for victory.

After the decision to go to war was made, and before the battle began, assumptions and decisions were made, among which were:

1. The real enemy was the Republican Guard
2. The only non-military opposition would be from diehard Baathist “dead-enders”.
3. Go with 3 Army, 1 Marine and 1 UK divisions: one through Turkey (4 ID), the others through Kuwait, with another division (1 Cav), supporting units and coalition forces following immediately
4. Attack early but not until the initial force is in place.
5. Post-war would not require many troops to stay, maybe 30,000, because, other coalition troops and most of the 300,000-man Iraqi Army and the police would soon establish order because we would be greeted as liberators.

As the war progressed, all of these initial assumptions proved wrong and all of the decisions were undone- changed on the fly - yet OSECDEF and CENTCOM (Gen Franks) would not allow the battle plan or the aftermath plan to be changed.

For my money, the real hero of the war was Army LTG McKiernan, the ground forces commander for the war. As Washington cut troops, cut materiel, cut reinforcements (including halting the deployment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav), failed to open the northern front through Turkey, failed to enlist viable coalition military support, bypassed the JCS, bypassed McKiernan and went to subordinate commanders with direct orders, and in general, did for the Iraq War what McNamara did for the Viet Nam war, only faster - yet McKiernan rolled with every punch.

Gen Franks' own book *American Soldier* would have you believe that he practically pulled the war off by himself. This book will tell you who the real heroes and geniuses were who pulled it off against odds no fair government would ever impose on its soldiers.

By the time the initial battles were over on 1 May, a full fledged insurgency had been running since two days into the battle, with the Fedayeen being the real enemy, not the Republican Guard.

At that point, Garner was sacked, the US military high command was replaced *en masse* with Generals and staff with no Middle East experience. Bremer was brought in to set up the Coalition Provisional Authority, and the last of the decisions was undone when he promptly issued CPA Order #1 dissolving the Army and the Police, followed by CPA Order #2 dissolving three ministries, including Defense, and 23 other organizations. There was no government left, instead there were 300,000 angry, armed people on the street without money or work.

Get this book! Read it! You'll never find a better way to understand where we are today and why. [Ed.]

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

### WORLD PREMIERE PLAY TO BENEFIT HOMELESS VETERANS

June 20, 2006

LOS ANGELES -- A new original play by writer and actor Michael McFall will make its world premiere in July to help homeless veterans get off the streets. McFall's sarcastic, darkly humorous, and personal work, [Dirty White Tuxedo Pants and a brown plastic bag](#), follows a homeless veteran in Los Angeles and was inspired by the writer's personal experiences with his uncle, a Vietnam-era veteran rendered homeless in the wake of war.

"Attention and aid for the disproportionate numbers of homeless veterans is long overdue," said McFall, who also plays the main role in the play. "I wanted to pen an entertaining show and do something cool to honor the memory of my uncle, Chris."

A percentage of the proceeds will be donated to [New Directions, Inc.](#), a nonprofit group that helps put homeless veterans in contact with medical and psychiatric care, benefits, vocational training, job placement, and long-term housing.

*Dirty White Tuxedo Pants and a brown plastic bag* will run July 13-Aug. 12, at the Globe Playhouse in West Hollywood, Calif. Tickets including a gala on July 15 only: cost \$30 in advance and \$35 at the box office. Tickets for all other shows cost \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. To purchase, visit [www.plays411.com](http://www.plays411.com) or call (323) 960-4429.

<More at: [www.backstage.com/bsa/news\\_reviews/announcement/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1002690903](http://www.backstage.com/bsa/news_reviews/announcement/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1002690903)>

### **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).

## 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. We are getting very close to a favorable ruling on our status as a 501(c)(3), which will make your donations tax deductible on your federal taxes (they already are in the state of California). You can also buy our handsome pins using the same method.

## MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

### **TO THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO OUR BULLETIN # 6**

David Martins and our family offer our thanks and gratitude to you for your participation in the success of the David Martins Benefit held on Thursday, June 8, 2006.

The solace that was given to David and our family is immeasurable. The caring and true feeling of patriotism and humanity was strong that night. It brings a sense of renewal in the faith of mankind and reminds us of what we are capable of during times of great need. Because of the support from you and the members of the community, David knows it will be just a short while before he can return home.

Again, we give you our thanks and rest assured that your deeds will never be forgotten.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Villanueva

[rebvillanueva@yahoo.com](mailto:rebvillanueva@yahoo.com)

## FROM ONE OF OUR MEMBERS (EDITED FOR LENGTH)

### LET'S ALL SHOP AT SEARS!!!

I assume you have all seen the reports about how Sears is treating its reservist employees who are called up? By law, they are required to hold their jobs open and available, but nothing more.

Usually, people take a big pay cut and lose benefits as a result of being called up. **Sears is voluntarily paying the difference in salaries and maintaining all benefits, including medical insurance and bonus programs, for all called up reservist employees for up to two years.** I submit that Sears is an exemplary corporate citizen and should be recognized for its contribution. Suggest we all shop at Sears, and be sure to find a manager to tell them why we are there so the company gets the positive reinforcement it well deserves.

Please pass this on to all your friends, Sears needs to be recognized for this outstanding contribution and we need to show them, as Americans, we do appreciate what they are doing for our military! This program is verified By Snopes.com at [www.snopes.com/politics/military/sears.asp](http://www.snopes.com/politics/military/sears.asp) and by company correspondence.

### TIE DEFENSE BUDGET TO VA BUDGET

I have a simple idea that will appeal to both sides of the political aisle -- blue and red.

Today the Department of Defense's budget is a whopping \$455 billion; the Veteran's Affairs budget is about \$30 billion. These numbers speak for themselves (at least to me) but my idea will serve the general public and eliminate political pork-barrel bickering, nauseating debate and patriotic pretentiousness.

It's simple: Legally bind the DOD budget to the VA budget. Each time Congress raises the DOD budget, it simultaneously raises the VA budget by a fixed percentage or ratio. For example, DOD gets \$100, the VA gets \$15, or 15 percent.

First, we must level the playing field. I propose increasing the VA budget to 15 percent of the DOD budget or \$68 billion. From then on, any increase (including mid-year congressional appropriations to the DOD) is matched by a 15 percent contribution to the VA. The Iraq war is costing \$5 billion a month. Don't the casualties and the families of the actual warriors deserve the best medical support system they can get? All the veterans of all the past wars deserve better, too. So if the right side of the aisle wants a new SST fighter, then the left side of the aisle gets a couple arms and legs. Seems fair to me.

If it's all about money, which sadly, I believe this country has come to, let's put at least 15 percent of the war machine where it can do some human good.

Jane L. Benefield - USAF veteran 1965-1969

## RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

### THIS IS THE ISSUE THAT IS SUPPOSED TO CONTAIN THE UPDATE ON FEDERAL VETERANS' LEGISLATION. I APOLOGIZE, BUT THAT UPDATE WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I CAN FIND A VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH THE RESEARCH

### \$160 MILLION IN EMERGENCY FUNDING WILL ALLOW THE VA TO PROVIDE FREE CREDIT MONITORING SERVICES FOR AFFECTED VETERANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL

Thursday, June 22, 2006

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) today succeeded in passing emergency funding through the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure that veterans healthcare and benefits are not raided as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responds to last month's data security breach. The amendment passed 15-13 and garnered the support of two Republican members of the Committee.

... Murray, a senior member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and Byrd, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, are concerned that the VA will fund that program by cutting money from the VA's healthcare, benefits or information technology accounts.

..."It's not acceptable to tell veterans – 'We lost your personal information and by the way, we're going to cut your healthcare and benefits to pay for this mess that we created,' " Murray said.

<More at: [www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvademsnews/senatecvademsnews06-22-06.htm](http://www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvademsnews/senatecvademsnews06-22-06.htm)>

## **VETS HOUSING AND BENEFITS BILL BECOMES LAW**

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs | June 16, 2006

Washington, DC - Legislation to help servicemembers and veterans with their housing and other benefit needs was signed into law Thursday, June 15 by President Bush.

"I am very pleased that this legislation, S. 1235, the '[Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Act of 2006](#)' was adopted with unanimous support in both the House and Senate," said the bill's sponsor, U.S. Senator Larry Craig, who chairs the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

"Provisions of this legislation will help improve the lives of servicemembers returning from the Global War on Terrorism, especially those who have severe disabilities."

Among its many provisions is one which authorizes [VA](#) to make grants available to assist with housing adaptations at a family member's home in which a severely disabled servicemember is temporarily residing. The grants range from between \$2,000 and \$14,000.

"Until today, severely disabled veterans had to own their own homes to qualify for adapted housing grant assistance from VA. But that doesn't make sense for many young men and women, some of whom may live with their parents after sustaining life-altering injuries. We have made an important change in the law," Craig said.

<More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,101459,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,101459,00.html)>

### **SOME LEGISLATORS ARE TRYING, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REALLY SERIOUS FAILURES THAT WE SHOULD NOT FORGET!**

**There have been three key amendments presented in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress that are worthy of all veterans' attention. Each attempted to modify legislation to aid veterans – each failed in the Senate.** Data from [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)

10/05/2005 - **Official Title of Legislation: S Amdt 1937 to HR 2863:** To ensure that future funding for health care for former members of the Armed Forces takes into account changes in population and inflation. **Roll Call Number: 251 - Motion Failed (Senate) - Sponsor: Amendment: Sen Stabenow [MI];** Original Bill: Rep Young [FL-10]

**Highlights:** -Establishes all future discretionary appropriations for the Veterans Health Administration at the current FY 2005 discretionary funding level and creates a formula that adjusts for inflation and changes in the number of veterans using the health services -Creates a separate formula for all future mandatory appropriations for the Veterans Health Administration based on obligated FY 2004 funding levels

11/17/2005 - **Official Title of Legislation: S Amdt 2634 to S 2020:** To provide an additional \$500,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010, to be used for readjustment counseling, related mental health services, and treatment and rehabilitative services for veterans with mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, or substance use disorder. **Roll Call Number: 343 Motion Rejected (Senate) Sponsor:Amendment: Sen Boxer [CA];** Original Bill: Sen Grassley [IA]

02/02/2006 - **Official Title of Legislation: S Amdt 2735 to S Amdt 2707 to HR 4297:** To support the health needs of our veterans and military personnel and reduce the deficit by making tax rates fairer for all Americans. **Roll Call Number: 007 Motion Rejected (Senate) Sponsor: Amendment: Sen Dodd (CT);** Original Bill: Rep. Thomas [CA-22]

**Highlights:** - \$14 billion for the Veterans Benefits Administration for Compensation and Pensions for the years of 2006 through 2010 - \$6.9 billion to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Veterans Health Administration for Medical Care between the years 2006 through 2010 - \$1 billion for the establishment of the Veterans Hospital Improvement Fund - Modifies tax rates on capital gains and dividends

### **RETREAT – NEWS**

#### **MALIK'S MASTER PLAN**

Rod Nordland - Newsweek - 24 June 2006

***A national reconciliation plan for Iraq calls for a timetable for withdrawal of US troops and, controversially, amnesty for insurgents who attacked American and Iraqi soldiers.***

A timetable for withdrawal of occupation troops from Iraq. Amnesty for all insurgents who attacked US and Iraqi military targets. Release of all security detainees from US and Iraqi prisons. Compensation for victims of coalition military operations.

Those sound like the demands of some of the insurgents themselves, and in fact they are. But they're also key clauses of a national reconciliation plan drafted by new Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who will unveil it Sunday. The provisions will spark sharp debate in Iraq - but the fiercest opposition is likely to come from Washington, which has opposed any talk of timetables, or of amnesty for insurgents who have attacked American soldiers. But in Iraq, even a senior military official in the US-led coalition said Friday that the coalition might consider a timetable under certain circumstances. And the official was careful to point out that a distinction needs to be made between terrorists and the resistance.

<More at: [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13521628/site/newsweek](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13521628/site/newsweek)>

## **'WASH POST' OBTAINS SHOCKING MEMO FROM U.S. EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD, DETAILS INCREASING DANGER AND HARDSHIP**

Greg Mitchell – Editor & Publisher - June 18, 2006

NEW YORK The Washington Post has obtained a cable, marked "sensitive," that it says show that just before President Bush left on a surprise trip last Monday to the Green Zone in Baghdad for an upbeat assessment of the situation there, "the U.S. Embassy in Iraq painted a starkly different portrait of increasing danger and hardship faced by its Iraqi employees."

This cable outlines, the Post reported Sunday, "the daily-worsening conditions for those who live outside the heavily guarded international zone: harassment, threats and the employees' constant fears that their neighbors will discover they work for the U.S. government." ...-- "Personal safety depends on good relations with the 'neighborhood' governments, who barricade streets and ward off outsiders. The central government, our staff says, is not relevant; even local mukhtars have been displaced or co-opted by militias. People no longer trust most neighbors."

<More at: [www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1002690071](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1002690071)>

## **SENATE PASSES \$517 BILLION MILITARY BUDGET**

Agence France-Presse | June 23, 2006

The US Senate unanimously approved a 517.7 billion dollar defense bill for fiscal year 2007 that includes 50 billion dollars in funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Passed on Thursday, the bill, which also includes a 2.2 percent pay raise for troops, will have to be reconciled with the House of Representatives' 427.6 billion dollar military budget passed Tuesday that also includes 50 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan. The US government's fiscal year 2007 starts October 1.

<More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,102624,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,102624,00.html)>

## **TWO VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE WILLING TO PUT THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTHS ARE**

### **OFFICIAL DONATES SALARY TO HELP WOUNDED**

Rudi Williams - American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 23, 2006 – Civil servant Ronald A. Rosenfeld demonstrated his heartfelt commitment to helping wounded troops in dramatic fashion -- he donated \$150,000, the equivalent of his annual salary, to the [Walter Reed Society](#). About two years ago, a Catholic Monsignor told Rosenfeld and his wife, Patty, that war-wounded servicemembers from Iraq and Afghanistan were receiving outstanding medical treatment at Washington's Walter Reed Army Medical Center, but that money was in short supply for certain quality-of-life items. <More at: [www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2006/20060623\\_5494.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2006/20060623_5494.html)>

### **CHER BACKS EFFORT TO MODIFY SOLDIERS' HELMETS**

June 21, 2006

**NEW YORK (AP)** -- Cher, who opposes the war in Iraq but supports the troops, says using her celebrity to promote effective helmets for U.S. soldiers is rewarding -- and "the right thing to do."

"To be able to use your celebrity for something that you really think is worthwhile is so rewarding," the 60-year-old singer-actress says in an interview that was to air Wednesday night on CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360". "It just makes you feel like this is the right thing to do. This is the American thing to do," she tells Cooper.

... The entertainer has donated more than \$130,000 to the group Operation Helmet, which pays about \$100 to modify the inside of soldiers' helmets to make them better able to absorb shock from a bomb blast.

<More at: [www.marine-corps-news.com/2006/06/cher\\_backs\\_effort\\_to\\_modify\\_so.htm](http://www.marine-corps-news.com/2006/06/cher_backs_effort_to_modify_so.htm)>

## U.S. MILITARY BRINGING EQUIPMENT HOME

Ryan Lenz - Associated Press Writer - June 21, 2006

BALAD, Iraq -- The U.S. military has begun sending thousands of battered Humvees and other war-torn equipment home as more Iraqi units join the fight against insurgents and American units scheduled for Iraq duty have their orders canceled. In the last four months, the Army has tagged 7,000 Humvees and 17,000 other pieces of equipment to be shipped to the United States to be rebuilt. They then will be distributed among active and reserve units at home, or possibly returned to equip Iraqi security forces. <More at: [http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1107AP\\_Iraq\\_War\\_Equipment.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1107AP_Iraq_War_Equipment.html)>

## EUROPE SPENDING LESS ON MILITARY, US LEADS PACK

13 June, 2006 Gulf Times

**STOCKHOLM:** Record overall military spending in 2005 masked divergent trends across the globe, with expenditure on the rise in the US and the Middle East but on the decline in Europe, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said yesterday. The US remained the biggest worldwide spender with 48% of the \$1.118 tn pie and alone accounted for 80% of the \$33 bn increase in global spending, it said in its annual report.

... Europe was the only region with a decrease in military spending, by 1.7%, especially because of western European spending cuts. The biggest falls were recorded in Italy and Britain, SIPRI said.

**Worldwide military spending** represented 2.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2005, or **173 dollars per capita. In China, spending was \$31.20 per capita, and in India, \$18.50. This compares to \$1,604 of military spending for each American, and \$1,430 for each Israeli, SIPRI said.** [My emphasis – Ed.]

The 15 biggest spenders accounted for 84% of all expenditure. They are, in declining order, the US, Britain, France, Japan, China, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, South Korea, Canada, Australia, Spain and Israel.

<More at: [www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=91575&version=1&template\\_id=39&parent\\_id=21](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=91575&version=1&template_id=39&parent_id=21)

## THIS MAY SOUND GREAT UNLESS YOU HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA – IT AIN'T BONDI BEACH FOLKS!

## US MILITARY BASES ARE WELCOME, SAYS HOWARD

20 June, 2006 - Gulf Times

**SYDNEY:** Prime Minister John Howard said yesterday the US was welcome to establish military bases in Australia. He was commenting on a report that two joint military training and “forward expeditionary bases” would be built in the north of the country.

“The notion of bases or operational facilities or training facilities by Americans is something I would warmly welcome,” Howard said, without specifically confirming the report in the Australian Financial Review. “We made an announcement some time ago to the effect that we were going to expand the capacity for training and operations exercises in northern Australia for Americans,” he said. “Whether you describe that as bases or not, I don’t know.”

...A new base at Bradshaw in the Northern Territory would be equipped with a landing strip for giant C-17 military transport aircraft and accommodation for some 750 troops, roughly the number in a US marine expeditionary battalion, the Financial Review said, quoting defence sources. This would give the US a major forward base to station and rotate troops and equipment for deployment to regional trouble spots. A base further south at Yampi Sound on the northwestern coast of Western Australia would host joint US-Australia training in amphibious seaborne landing techniques, the paper said.

<More at: [www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=92929&version=1&template\\_id=39&parent\\_id=21](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=92929&version=1&template_id=39&parent_id=21)

## TOO BAD KNIGHT-RIDDER IS DISAPPEARING

## KNIGHT-RIDDER HONORED FOR ITS REPORTING ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS

Knight Ridder Newspapers Jun. 13, 2006

**WASHINGTON** - A Knight-Ridder investigation of the government's treatment of veterans received an award from the National Press Club, the Washington-based association of news professionals announced.

"[Discharged and Dishonored](#)," by Chris Adams and Alison Young of the Knight-Ridder Washington Bureau won the organization's Joseph D. Ryle Award for writing about problems that confront the elderly. The stories highlighted problems elderly veterans and their widows face getting the pensions and disability payments they are due from the government. The veterans

stories ran in 30 Knight-Ridder papers in 2004 and 2005; they previously won awards for outstanding Washington reporting and investigative journalism. They can be read at: [www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/special\\_packages/veterans](http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/special_packages/veterans)

## TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Purpose
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

### A LONG STORY THAT IS WORTH CLICKING ON TO GET THE WHOLE PICTURE

#### **DEADLY PRICE PAID FOR HUMVEE ARMOR USED TO PROTECT SOLDIERS**

Russell Carollo, Mike Wagner - Staff Writer – Dayton Daily News

Sgt. Rene Knox Jr. of New Orleans was driving a heavily armored Humvee on a blackened dirt road near Balad, Iraq, when the vehicle rolled down an embankment and into a canal — killing Knox, two other soldiers and a serviceman trying to rescue them.

Three days later, Sgt. Timothy R. Osbey and Spc. Joseph A. Rahaim, National Guardsmen from Magnolia, Miss., drowned under nearly identical circumstances when their Humvee rolled over into a canal.

Twelve days later, Sgt. Julio E. Negron and Spc. Lizbeth Robles of Fort Carson, Colo., were killed and two others were injured after their armored Humvee hit the rear of another vehicle, throwing the two soldiers from the Humvee as it spun and then rolled twice.

None of the deaths was linked to combat.

The accidents are among 14 Humvee rollovers worldwide that killed nine soldiers and injured 18 in a 30-day period last year. In at least 13 of those accidents, the military Humvees were equipped with some additional armor intended to protect soldiers from injury, and nine of the vehicles were heavily armored with thousands of pounds of added weight.

"If there were two or three of these kinds of accidents (in the United States) on the same kind of vehicle because of a rollover, they would recall them all," said Debbie Newhouse of Glendale, Ariz., whose 21-year-old son, Nicholas Eugene Wilson, was killed in a rollover accident 11 days after the fatal crash involving Negron and Robles. "What the hell is the Army doing? What are they putting our kids into?" <More at: [www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/humvee/daily/0611humvee.html](http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/humvee/daily/0611humvee.html)>

#### **ARMY: 'ACTIVE PROTECTION' NEEDED ASAP**

InsideDefense.com NewsStand | Ashley Roque | June 15, 2006

Army leadership has an obligation to soldiers in theater to field an active protection system as quickly as possible, even if it means getting out ahead of the Future Combat System (FCS), according to Gen. William Wallace, the head of Training and Doctrine Command. Wallace, who spoke with *Inside the Army* following a June 8 roundtable with reporters, said he did not think the development of an APS technology was mature enough, to date, to be integrated onto vehicles but said he believes the Army has an opportunity to move "very quickly" on fielding such a capability.

"I don't think we ought to wait until FCS for the active protection system if the technology proves itself of being worthy," Wallace [said]. "You know, it is one of those spiraling things. If we had a capability that matures quicker than the FCS [one] then we have an obligation to pull that stuff into the operational Army as quickly as we can and as quickly as we can afford it."

Although each APS system is unique, the basic principle behind the technology places a radar package on vehicles to detect an incoming rocket-propelled grenade. Once detected, the system engages the incoming round before it strikes the vehicle.

<More at: [www.military.com/features/0,15240,101169,00.html](http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,101169,00.html)>

## **FOR THOSE WHO DOUBT THAT SOLDIERS WANT THEIR HEAVY BODY ARMOR**

### **BODY ARMOR SAVES MARINES**

Marine Corps News | Graham M. Paulsgrove | June 14, 2006

Habbaniyah, Iraq - The enemy snipers hit their targets- but it yielded them no results. In less than a week's time, Sgt. Joshua S. Adams and Pfc. Jason Hanson, of D Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were hit by sniper shots. But the enemy had little effect because both were left with only minor injuries thanks to their small-arms protective inserts, or SAPI, plates.

While working in support of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, to complete counterinsurgency and humanitarian operations in the town of Habbaniyah, Hanson was the lead man on a patrol looking for roadside bombs on the main highway when a sniper shot him in the chest.

"I was checking my side and when I looked forward, I got shot -- it knocked me down," said Hanson, 21, a scout from Forks, Wash.

"I saw him on the ground, ran up to him and rolled him over," said the on-scene corpsman Seaman Chad T. Kenyon, 20, from Tucson, Ariz. "I saw that the round had gone through the front of his flak, so I opened up his flak and saw no bleeding. Then he looked up at me and said 'I'm fine, Doc.'"

The 7.62 mm bullet went through Hanson's rifle but was stopped by the Marine's SAPI plate, leaving him with some bruising on his chest. But it could have been a lot worse.

... "I'm happy to carry the extra weight," Hanson said. <More at: [www.military.com/features/0,15240,101163,00.html](http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,101163,00.html)>

### **SOLDIER SUICIDES HINT AT MILITARY FAILURES**

Lisa Chedekel and Matthew Kauffman June 12, 2006 - Hartford (Conn.) Courant

Army Spc. Jeffrey Henthorn, 25, of Choctaw, Okla., was sent back to Iraq for a second tour even though his superiors knew he had twice threatened suicide. He killed himself in 2005.

Army Pfc. David L. Potter, 22, of Johnson City, Tenn., was diagnosed with anxiety and depression while serving in Iraq in 2004. Records show Potter remained on active duty in Baghdad despite a suicide attempt and a psychiatrist's recommendation that he be separated from the Army. Ten days after the recommendation was signed, he slid a gun out from under another soldier's bed and shot himself.

These deaths are among the most extreme failures by the U.S. military to properly screen, treat and evacuate mentally unfit troops, a [Hartford Courant](http://Hartford Courant) investigation has found.

<More at: <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Jun/12/In/FP606120345.html>>

### **VETS' HIRING PREFERENCE CHANGES FOR GUARD, RESERVE**

Rick Maze June 12, 2006 - Times staff writer

Beginning last Friday, National Guard and reserve members released from active duty will get the same veterans' hiring preference for federal jobs as those who are separated or retired from regular active-duty assignments.

<More at: [www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-1864866.php](http://www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-1864866.php)>

### **PTSD CARE DEMAND TAXING SYSTEM**

Bangor Daily News | June 21, 2006

Thousands of veterans are returning from combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan in need of mental health services, and concern is growing about the ability of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to meet the demand. Over the past year, the number of veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder has more than doubled, increasing from a cumulative 9,688 by May 2005 to 25,317 by last month, according to a recent VA report.

U.S. Rep. Michael Michaud, D-Maine, on Monday expressed his concern that affected veterans will not be able to get the treatment and support they need to return to normal civilian life. "If the trend keeps up, by [Sept. 30] more than 30,000 servicemembers and veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will seek mental health services at the VA due to an initial diagnosis of PTSD. Frankly, I don't think the VA's budget planned for this number of new veterans with mental health concerns," Michaud said. <More at: [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,102159,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,102159,00.html)>



## **APPARENTLY THEY JUST GOT THE WORD! –ANSWERS COMING IN 11 MONTHS!**

### **DOD ESTABLISHES MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE**

June 20, 2006

The Department of Defense announced today the formation of a congressionally-directed task force to examine matters related to mental health and the Armed Forces.

“This is an extremely important effort involving a collaboration of DoD, federal and private sector experts in mental health,” said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

The Mental Health Task Force comprised of seven DoD members and seven non-DoD members, will submit a report to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in May 2007. It will include assessments and recommendations for improving the efficacy of mental health services provided to service members by DoD and will begin meeting in July 2006.

<More at: [www.defenselink.mil/releases/2006/nr20060620-13301.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2006/nr20060620-13301.html)>

More information regarding the DoD Mental Health Task Force can be found at [www.ha.osd.mil/afeb/mhtf/members.cfm](http://www.ha.osd.mil/afeb/mhtf/members.cfm).

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

### **NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF JUNE 21, 2006**

This week, the Army, Navy and Air Force announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Marine Corps and Coast Guard numbers decreased. The net collective result is 740 more reservists mobilized than last week.

At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 81,206; Navy Reserve, 4,847; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,150; Marine Corps Reserve, 7,251; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 322. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 100,776, including both units and individual augmentees.

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at [www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2006/d20060621nqr.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2006/d20060621nqr.pdf).

### **OIF/OEF – HACK DATE SUNDAY 25 JUNE 2006**

#### **OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**

KILLED US	2,517
WOUNDED US [EST. NO DoD UPDATE SINCE 6/11] ≥	18,572
KILLED UK	113
KILLED OTHER COALITION	113
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	645
KILLED CONTRACTORS	340
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 34,827
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 42,889
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 185,000+

#### **OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

KILLED US	312
WOUNDED/INJURED US	876
KILLED COALITION	83
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

For those of you who read *Cobra II*, this map is sufficiently detailed to allow you to follow the narrative.



## 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

**THIS ISSUE'S ADD-ON – SOMETHING EXTRA FOR YOU TO USE, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO THINKS THAT THE TROOPS ARE GETTING A “FREE RIDE”**

Position	Res	Total Pay	Name	Age	Position	Res	Total Pay	Name	Age
CEO Yahoo	CA	\$120,000,000	Terry Samel	63	Filmmaker	CO	\$53,000		
Author	NH	\$76,500,000	Dan Brown	41	<b>Warrant Officer 2</b>		\$52,701	\$41,256	28
Rapper	NY	\$36,000,000	Sean Combs	36	Insurance Adjustor	OH	\$52,600		
Talk show host	NY	\$31,000,000	Howard Stern	52	Railroad scheduler	FL	\$51,600		
Movie Actress	CA	\$30,000,000	Angelina Jolie	30	High School Librarian	TX	\$50,300		
Movie actress	CA	\$30,000,000	Reese Witherspoon	29	Architect	WA	\$50,000		
Baseball player	NY	\$25,000,000	Alex Rodriguez	30	Gift consultant	MD	\$50,000		
Musician - dead	NY	\$22,000,000	John Lennon	dead	Restaurant Owner	MT	\$50,000		
Movie/TV actress	CA	\$18,500,000	Jennifer Anniston	36	Auto sales	MI	\$48,000		
Basketball Player	CA	\$15,900,000	Kobe Bryant	27	School administrator	ID	\$48,000		
Move actress	CA	\$15,000,000	Dakota Fanning	12	<b>1st Lieutenant/Ltjg</b>		\$47,852	\$36,896	24
Fashion designer	NY	\$14,600,000	Tommy Hilfiger	54	<b>Sergeant 1st Class</b>		\$47,007	\$34,794	33
Football player	IN	\$14,000,000	Peyton Manning	29	Postal Clerk	NH	\$46,000		
CEO Morgan Stanley	NY	\$11,500,000	John Mack	61	Detective	ME	\$45,800		
Race car driver	NC	\$6,900,000	Jeff Gordon	34	Electrician	CA	\$45,200		
CEO General Manager	MI	\$4,800,000	Richard Wagoner	53	<b>Warrant Officer 1</b>		\$45,005	\$34,805	25
Singer	TX	\$3,000,000	Kelly Clarkson	23	Non Profit Executive	NM	\$45,000		
News Anchor	NY	\$2,000,000	Anderson Cooper	38	Nurse	IN	\$45,000		
TV Talk-show host	NY	\$1,500,000	Jon Stewart	43	Dietician	FL	\$43,000		
TV Actress	CA	\$1,250,000	Terri Hatcher	41	Firefighter	IA	\$42,600		
Snowboarder	CA	\$1,000,000	Shaun White	19	College professor	KY	\$42,500		
Realtor	MN	\$600,000			Medical Resident	MN	\$42,000		
Chief Justice US Supreme Ct	DC	\$212,100			Court Clerk	OR	\$40,600		
US VP	DC	\$212,100			<b>Staff Sergeant</b>		\$40,221	\$28,692	27
<i>Speaker of the House</i>	DC	\$212,100			Respiratory therapist	OK	\$40,000		
Homeland Security Chief	DC	\$183,500			Webmaster	NB	\$40,000		
Senate/House Leader	DC	\$183,500			Program Coordinator	MA	\$38,000		
<b>General/Admiral</b>		\$167,603	\$149,198	56	Police records clerk	MD	\$37,600		
<i>Senator/Representative</i>	DC	\$165,200			Office manager	WA	\$36,400		
Chef	VT	\$160,000			<b>Sergeant</b>		\$35,423	\$24,728	24
<b>Lt General/VADM</b>		\$159,251	\$140,846	55	Interactive director	AZ	\$34,000		
<b>Maj General/RADM</b>		\$150,495	\$132,091	52	Environmental activist	DC	\$33,000		
CEO Staff agency	WI	\$150,000			Human Resources Specialist	WI	\$32,700		
<b>Brigadier General/RADM</b>		\$134,979	\$116,575	49	TV engineer	PA	\$32,500		
Software Sales	FL	\$130,000			YMCA Director	SD	\$32,500		
Federal Agency Director	DE	\$129,600			Medical transcriber	NJ	\$32,000		
Insurance marketing	TX	\$125,000			Nonprofit executive	TN	\$31,500		
Tennis player	WV	\$110,000			Medical writer	ND	\$31,200		
<b>Colonel/Captain (Navy)</b>		\$105,643	\$88,855	46	<b>2nd Lieutenant/Ensign</b>		\$30,331	\$28,123	22
Home sales manager	WA	\$96,000			Photographer	KY	\$30,000		
Public Relations Consultant	CA	\$90,000			Shipping clerk	NY	\$29,700		
<b>Lt Colonel/Commander</b>		\$88,845	\$72,583	41	Lab technician	KS	\$27,000		
Landscaping Executive	KS	\$87,000			Museum educator	DC	\$27,000		
Singer/songwriter	CT	\$87,000			Auto Mechanic	IA	\$25,900		
<b>Warrant Officer 5</b>		\$80,749	\$66,578	40	Fitness sales	GA	\$24,500		
Teacher	MI	\$75,300			TV News editor	NB	\$24,500		
Marketing Executive	MS	\$75,000			Small Business Owner	CO	\$24,000		
<b>Major/Lt. Commander</b>		\$74,327	\$59,731	35	School secretary	WY	\$24,000		
Geologist	UT	\$72,000			Emergency Room Technician	PA	\$23,000		
Urban planner	OH	\$71,500			Dairy farmer	WI	\$22,600		
<b>Warrant Officer 4</b>		\$70,518	\$57,348	35	Medical biller	NY	\$22,000		
DoD analyst	IL	\$70,000			<b>Corporal</b>		\$20,347	\$20,347	21
Roofing executive	IL	\$70,000			TV production assistant	OK	\$20,000		
Nuclear physicist	NM	\$66,200			<b>Private 1st Class</b>		\$17,474	\$17,474	19
Network administrator	MA	\$65,000			<b>Private</b>		\$16,614	\$16,614	18
Sales Rep	ME	\$65,000			Greeting Card writer	PA	\$16,000		
<b>Sergeant Major</b>		\$64,518	\$50,789	44	Diver	WA	\$15,000		
Truck driver	RI	\$63,300			Matchmaker	MA	\$15,000		
<b>Captain/Lieutenant</b>		\$62,475	\$50,018	28	<b>Recruit</b>		\$14,821	\$14,821	18
Publisher	DE	\$60,000			Musician	VT	\$14,000		
Refinery operator	WY	\$60,000			Retail manager	AR	\$14,000		
<b>Warrant Officer 3</b>		\$59,286	\$47,027	31	Caregiver	ME	\$13,000		
Purchasing agent	CO	\$58,100			Retail clerk	NV	\$12,600		
Pilot	AL	\$58,000			Dog groomer	IN	\$12,000		
Security supervisor	WV	\$58,000			Belly Dancer	HI	\$10,000		
Fraud Investigator	PA	\$55,000			Mayor	MT	\$9,600		
<b>Master Sergeant</b>		\$53,977	\$41,065	39	Yoga Instructor	RI	\$7,000		

**FOOTNOTES**

2005 Civilian pay information "Parade" magazine 3/12/06  
 Military pay DoD 2005 Pay Tables Col 3 w/allowances; Col 4 base pay  
 Comparison includes military housing and subsistence  
 Military age based on reasonable estimate for grade