

SOUND OFF!



VOL. I, NO 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

10 AUGUST 2005

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

This issue is devoted to catching up some older news items, and to establishing the form of some of the sections. Suggestions for subjects and form are always welcome.

First – a great statement from Veterans United, an association of various veterans organizations:

**“SENATORS & CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES REMEMBER THIS!
WHILE THE PRESIDENT CANNOT RUN FOR OFFICE A 3 RD TERM, YOU
CAN AND WE VETERANS HAVE VERY LONG MEMORIES.”**

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS

For all those others who believe that a \$3.45 decal is more than enough “support”.

Slap a Yellow Ribbon On My SUV

From Daily KOS

*Sung to the tune of "Tie A Yellow Ribbon 'Round The Ole
Oak Tree,"*

performed by Tony Orlando and Dawn

I never served, didn't have the time
My priorities were elsewhere in my prime
But now I've gotten older
And more patriotic, too
And though I'll never fight a war
There's something I can do
There's something I can do

I'll slap a yellow ribbon
On my SUV
I support our troops
Aren't you proud of me?
'Cuz when I slap that ribbon
On my SUV
I'll take it to town, drive all around
A patriot - that's me!
Oh, when I slap that yellow ribbon
On my SUV

My son has just turned twenty-four
But there's no need for him to fight this war
They will not bring the draft back
At least that's what Dubya said
But if they did I'd hide my kid so he won't end up dead
Take someone else instead

I'll slap a yellow ribbon
On my SUV
I support our troops
Aren't you proud of me?
'Cuz when I slap that ribbon
On my SUV
I'll show that I back our troops in Iraq
It's so plain to see
Oh, when I slap that yellow ribbon
On my SUV

Now if a ribbon seems to be
Not enough, then you will see...
A hundred yellow ribbons
On my SUV

Slap a ribbon on my SUV
Slap a ribbon on my SUV
Slap a ribbon on my SUV
Slap a ribbon on my SUV

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

At the meeting of the Veterans' Caucus of the Democratic Party in Sacramento on 29 July the caucus voted to donate \$1,000 to VUFT.

Shortly we will be able to have new members join on the website using PayPal. After we have been in business for 1 year, the bank will begin to take Visa.

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU! I

[NO LETTERS SO I BORROWED SOME FROM A CINDY SHEEHAN POST]

Lisa from Oregon writes:

My son in law in Iraq said they are being pressured round the clock to re-enlist or face stop loss. They are being offering \$30,000 signing bonus, tax free and told if they don't re-enlist, they are going to be stop lossed and get zero dollars. They are pushing the troops round the clock and Mark only got 3 hours sleep in 48 hours and when they get back, they are faced yet again with re-enlisting. Mark said many guys are scared and signing up and their families at home are very upset.(with good reason). We really need to push our media and congressmen to expose the horrible way our troops are being treated.

Lietta, also from Oregon writes:

*Yes, I have been trying since January 05 to get the word out regarding my own 2 loved ones and the soldiers in their division. Both served in Iraq, and their division, 1st Armored, was the first to be 'extended' so they served 15 months in Iraq, April 03 - July 04. They came back to their bases in August 04. **A mere 5 months later**, Jan 05, their division was told they were under orders to **re-deploy to Iraq and Stop Lossed** and would re-deploy in Fall 05. And I have been trying to call attention to the '**Retention**' practices ever since.*

March 05, it was time for both to make decision to re-enlist. As already under orders to re-deploy; as already under Stop Loss; their choices = 1) don't re-enlist but you will wind up in Iraq anyway under Stop Loss or 2) re-enlist and while you'll still wind up in Iraq under Stop Loss, at least you'll have the attractive bonus being offered.

*The point is that the '**Retention**' rate that is being touted as demonstrative of soldier's fervor and good faith in the war is **another deception being foisted on the media and public. Closer to the truth of the situation is that one they are in, they cannot get out and it is entrapment** from the front end with deceptive recruitment practices, again at re-enlistment time with the threat of deployment to Iraq under Stop Loss, again when contract ends and they are kept in and deployed via Stop Loss. What continues to be called an 'all voluntary military' has become an 'involuntary' military through the use strategies of deception and legal maneuvering for which there seems to be no remedy in the Stop Loss.*

Tia from Baltimore writes (her stepson was KIA in Iraq):

But I will never forget one thing: the day we dropped David off for boot camp - the day his father and I first met the recruiter - the recruiter put out his hand, smiled at me, shook my hand and said "you'll never have to worry about him again". I was shocked. I can only speculate what this person was telling David.

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

California Legislative Proposal "**California Shared Sacrifice Act of 2005**", is alive and on its way to the Audit Committee. The audit committee has been asked to look at the actual experience of National Guard troops and their families, on an accelerated basis. The legislation, which covers all Californians in uniform not just the National Guard, will be presented to the Veterans committee in parallel, so that the proposed legislation does not have to wait for the audit to be completed. Thanks to our chair, Bob Handy, for getting this off bottom-dead-center.

RETREAT – NEWS



Iraq veterans, including Bucks County's Patrick Murphy, are running for office. They bring a measured tone when talking about the conflict.

By Gaiutra Bahadur - [Inquirer](#) Staff Writer Jul 28th, 2005

Like John Kerry, Democrat [Patrick Murphy](#), an Iraq veteran running for Congress in Bucks County, is straight out of Central Casting: earnest, clean-cut, a lawyer, an officer in war.

But while Kerry was the poster boy for veterans who came home to denounce the war they fought, Murphy is reluctant to criticize: "I'm not antiwar. I'm not pro-war," he says. "I'm pro-troops."

[<More>](#)



All Quiet on the Home Front, and Some Soldiers Are Asking Why

By THOM SHANKER - Published: July 24, 2005

WASHINGTON, July 23 - The Bush administration's rallying call that America is a nation at war is increasingly ringing hollow to men and women in uniform, who argue in frustration that America is not a nation at war, but a nation with only its military at war.

From bases in Iraq and across the United States to the Pentagon and the military's war colleges, officers and enlisted personnel quietly raise a question for political leaders: if America is truly on a war footing, why is so little sacrifice asked of the nation at large?

There is no serious talk of a draft to share the burden of fighting across the broad citizenry, and neither Republicans nor Democrats are pressing for a tax increase to force Americans to cover the \$5 billion a month in costs from Iraq, Afghanistan and new counterterrorism missions.

There are not even concerted efforts like the savings-bond drives or gasoline rationing that helped to unite the country behind its fighting forces in wars past.

"Nobody in America is asked to sacrifice, except us," said one officer just back from a yearlong tour in Iraq, voicing a frustration now drawing the attention of academic specialists in military sociology.

Members of the military who discussed their sense of frustration did so only when promised anonymity, as comments viewed as critical of the civilian leadership could end their careers. The sentiments were expressed in more than two dozen interviews and casual conversations with enlisted personnel, noncommissioned officers, midlevel officers, and general or flag officers in Iraq and in the United States.

Charles Moskos, a professor emeritus at Northwestern University specializing in military sociology, said: "My terminology for it is 'patriotism lite,' and that's what we're experiencing now in both political parties. The political leaders are afraid to ask the public for any real sacrifice, which doesn't speak too highly of the citizenry.

Senior administration officials say they are aware of the tension and have opened discussions on whether to mobilize brigades of Americans beyond those already signed up for active duty or in the Reserves and National Guard. At the Pentagon and the State Department, officials have held preliminary talks on creating a Civilian Reserve, a sort of Peace Corps for professionals.

In an interview, Douglas J. Feith, the under secretary of defense for policy, said that discussions had begun on a program to seek commitments from bankers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, electricians, plumbers and solid-waste disposal experts to deploy to conflict zones for months at a time on reconstruction assignments, to relieve pressure on the military.

When President Bush last addressed the issue of nationwide support for the war effort in a formal speech, he asked Americans to use the Fourth of July as a time to "find a way to thank the men and women defending our freedom by flying the flag, sending a letter to our troops in the field or helping the military family down the street."

In the speech, at Fort Bragg, N.C., on June 28, Mr. Bush mentioned a Defense Department Web site, Americasupportsyou.mil, where people can learn about private-sector efforts to bolster the morale of the troops. He also urged those considering a career in the military to enlist because "there is no higher calling than service in our armed forces."

While officers and enlisted personnel say they enjoy symbolic signs of support, and the high ratings the military now enjoys in public opinion polls, "that's just not enough," said a one-star officer who served in Iraq. "There has to be more," he added, saying that the absence of a call for broader national sacrifice in a time of war has become a near constant topic of discussion among officers and enlisted personnel.

"For most Americans," said an officer with a year's experience in Iraq, "their role in the war on terror is limited to the slight inconvenience of arriving at the airport a few hours early."

David C. Hendrickson, a scholar on foreign policy and the presidency at Colorado College, said, "Bush understands that the support of the public for war - especially the war in Iraq - is conditioned on demanding little of the public."

Mr. Hendrickson said that after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, just as after the recent London bombings, political leaders urged the population to continue life as normal, so as not to give terrorists a moral victory by giving in to the fear of violence.

But he said the stress of the commitment to the continuing mission in Iraq was viewed by the public in a different light than a terrorist attack on home soil.

"The public wants very much to support the troops" in Iraq, he said. "But it doesn't really believe in the mission. Most consider it a war of choice, and a majority - although a thin one - thinks it was the wrong choice."

Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales Jr., who served as commandant of the Army War College and is now retired, said: "Despite the enormous impact of Sept. 11, it hasn't really translated into a national movement towards fighting the war on terrorism. It's almost as if the politicians want to be able to declare war and, at the same time, maintain a sense of normalcy."

General Scales said he had heard a heavy stream of concerns from current officers that "the military is increasingly isolated from the rest of the country."

"People associate being an officer with the priesthood," he added. "You know, there is an enormous amount of respect, but nobody wants to sign up for celibacy."

Private organizations like the Navy League of the United States that support the individual armed services have identified the tension and are using this theme to urge greater contributions from members now in the civilian world.

"We have recognized that and we have tried to sound the alarm," said Rear Adm. Stephen R. Pietropaoli, retired, the executive director of the Navy League.

"As an organization that is committed to supporting them by ensuring they have the weapons and tools and systems to fight and win, and also at the grass-roots level by providing assistance to families," Admiral Pietropaoli said, "we are aware that the burden has fallen almost solely on the shoulders of the uniformed military and security services and their families. We have used that in our calls to action by our members. We have said: 'We are at war. What have you done lately?' "

Morten G. Ender, who teaches sociology at West Point, has been interviewing soldiers, their spouses and cadets since the Iraq war started in 2003. Because the all-volunteer military is a self-selecting body and by definition is not drawn from a cross-section of America, he said, those with direct involvement constitute a far smaller percentage of the country than in past wars.

Mr. Ender said that the "rhetoric from the top" of the civilian leadership of the United States "doesn't move people towards actions."

Most Americans support the military, he said, and "feel like there is somebody out there taking care of the job."

"They say, 'I'm going to support those people, I believe in those people and God bless those people,' " he said. "By doing that, they can wash their hands of it."



Shortfall for veterans' services foretold, but House GOP leaders fired the messengers

By Suzanne Gamboa

ASSOCIATED PRESS - 9:50 a.m. July 16, 2005

WASHINGTON – Fellow Republicans warned House Speaker Dennis Hastert and Majority Leader Tom DeLay more than a year ago that the government would come up short – by at least \$750 million – for veterans' health care. The leaders' response: Fire the messengers. <More>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
20 Aug	Noon	Santa Barbara – Chair's House	VUFT Board Meeting	VUFT Executive Board	Planning/Action
24-Sep	Noon	Washington DC - The White House	National Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	11:00	San Francisco - Dolores Park	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Los Angeles - Olympic & Broadway	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Seattle - Westlake Plaza	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-26 Sep	11:00	DC - Washington Monument	March and Meetings	United for Peace & Justice	End-the-war
11-Nov	11:00	NYC – Madison Sq Park /5 th Ave	Parade	NYC Event Planning	Celebrate Vets
11-Nov	9:00	Sacramento – State House	Legislative Siege	VUFT	Action

All Veterans Day events acknowledged by the VA can be found at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/regsites.htm>

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

BUT FIRST SOME HISTORY!

The Bonus March

In 1924 Congress voted \$3,500,000,000 to the American veterans of the First World War. In order to prevent an immediate strain on its funds, the Government decided to pay the money over a 20 year period. During the Great Depression, many of these veterans found it difficult to find work. An increasing number came to the conclusion that the money would be more useful to them in this time of need than when the bonus was due.

In 1932 John Patman of Texas, introduced the Veteran's Bonus Bill which mandated the immediate cash payment of the endowment promised to the men who fought in the war.

In May 1932, 10,000 of these ex-soldiers marched on Washington in an attempt to persuade Congress to pass the Patman Bill. When they arrived in the capital the Bonus Marchers camped at Anacostia Flats, an area that had formerly been used as an army recruiting center. They built temporary homes

on the site and threatened to stay there until they received payment of money granted to them by Congress.

On 15th June the House of Representatives passed the Bonus Bill by 209-176. Two days later the Senate defeated it 62-18. The veterans were now ordered to leave Washington. When they refused to do so they were driven forcibly from their camps on 28th July, by troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur, controversially used tanks, four troops of cavalry with drawn sabers, and infantry with fixed bayonets, on the ex-serviceman. He justified his attack on former members of the United States Army by claiming that the country was on the verge of a communist revolution.

John Patman tried again after President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to power. This time he gained the support of important political figures such as Huey P. Long and Father Charles Coughlin. In 1936 the Veteran's Bonus Bill was eventually passed over the veto of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The enactment of this law culminated 17 years of agitation by the veterans for the payment of this bonus.



Returning veterans say benefits aren't keeping up with needs

By Hal Bernton - Seattle Times staff reporter Thursday, August 4, 2005 - 12:00 AM

Staff Sgt. Kevin Romanelli took a sudden financial hit when he retired from the Army at Fort Lewis in February.

A laundry list of medical problems from herniated discs to post-traumatic stress disorder kept him from working. When he left active service, his monthly paycheck plummeted from about \$4,000 to about \$1,300, not enough to support his family of five. His car, washer and dryer were repossessed. And the Afghanistan veteran says he was hounded by bill collectors demanding payment for overdue debts.

"I have three little girls, and couldn't do anything for their birthdays," Romanelli told Sen. Patty Murray at a Senate Veterans Affairs hearing yesterday at the Seattle Armory to examine the assistance now offered Afghanistan and Iraq veterans. <More>



Clueless in Committee - Waiting lists grow -- Rep. Buyer blames VA

Larry Scott: July 27, 2005

There's lots of "I told you so" going around Capitol Hill these days, with good reason. Those politicians who've long criticized the ongoing underfunding of VA healthcare have been proven right. And those who have consistently voted down more funds for VA healthcare still remain clueless.

Among the latter is Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HCVA). The following shows why.

On July 21, the HCVA learned, from a VA IG report, something that comes as no surprise to veterans: waiting lists for healthcare at VA hospitals all over the country are getting longer and longer. <More>



How vets lose the 2006 VA budget battle

Larry Scott - March 3, 2005

Like the old saying goes -- when you've got a lemon, make lemonade. But if your job is to sell the lemon, how do you go about doing that? The current U.S. administration is facing the same problem as it tries to sell the 2006 VA budget.

One way to sell the 2006 VA budget is to borrow well-tested tactics from PsyOps and add the best your political operatives have to offer. The method? To Distract, Distort, Disinform, Demonize and Divide. (NOTE: These political tactics are not exclusive to the VA budgetary process -- they are used to hide a multitude of sins. My examples will deal with the VA budget only.) After this, move forward with full knowledge that the veterans' service organizations will be true to form -- they'll squawk a little, but eventually back off.

The 2006 VA budget proposal is on the table, and the news is bad. <More>



Veterans Homes: Evicting old vets

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER EDITORIAL BOARD - July 18, 2005

The administration was unprepared to meet the needs of military veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. One scheme they've come up with to make up the cost of health care and other services for this new cadre of U.S. veterans is to shortchange some of this country's most vulnerable older veterans.

Sweeping new eligibility standards proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs would cut federal funding to thousands of old soldiers now living in state veterans homes. <More>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

George Duggins [1943-2005]: Former President, Vietnam Veterans of America <More>

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE TUESDAY, AUGUST 09, 2005

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	1,835
WOUNDED US	≥ 13,769
KILLED UK	93
KILLED OTHER COALITION	101
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	582
KILLED CONTRACTORS	254
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 32,830
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 26,396
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIV	≥ 131,411

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	217
WOUNDED/INJURED US	948
KILLED COALITION	101
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	303
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,587
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS	≥ 3,485

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NOTE: WE PUBLISH OUR NEWSLETTER EVERY TWO WEEKS (10TH AND 25TH).
WE ARE LOOKING FOR AN EDITOR. PLEASE LET US KNOW AT SCOOK@VUFT.ORG.

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LAST NAME: _____

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Years of Service: From Mo/Day/Yr ____/____/____. To Mo/Day/Yr ____/____/____

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Additional Donation: _____

I would like to serve on the following committee(s) [optional]:

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Planning and execution

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Materials
Posters, Flyers, etc. production

Message
Writing, editing, newsletter

Local Organizing
Form community group

REMARKS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: ____/____/____

NOTE: As a group we take no position on any military action engaged in by our nation. Individually, our members are pro- and anti-war, pro- and anti- the current administration. We only concern ourselves as an organization with the lives and circumstances of our troops, their families, the reasons for which and the conditions under which they go to war, and their treatment thereafter.