

Sound Off!



Vol. II, No 2 The Newsletter of VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, Inc.

“Veterans standing up for each other”

10 September 2006

First Call - THEME OF THE ISSUE AND/OR CLIPS & QUOTES

On truth and bias

There have been several first- and second-hand responses to our “Bulletin #9” which reported the votes in the 109th Congress on a number of issues important to veterans.. They questioned if I, and the organization, had a political bias.

Let’s talk about bias.

On the simplest level, if I make a political statement favoring one party or the other I am displaying my political bias.

Even simpler – if I were a sports reporter and only reported the wins of the LA Dodgers, and failed or refused to report the wins of the New York Yankees, then I would be displaying my bias.

If I were to cull the news for reports that spoke favorably of one party or faction and not of the other, then I would likewise be displaying my political bias.

Reporting the facts cannot be bias, only the selective reporting of facts. But if I report all of the votes on issues of interest to us – albeit using a list selected by another non-partisan organization – that cannot be bias, unless the selection of issues was rigged. If I or they had eliminated the votes that violated some political premise, and reported only those votes that supported the premise, that would be bias.

As a nation we have come to accuse those who speak the truth of being biased against those who shade the truth or who avoid the truth. Interestingly, it is generally truth not bias that makes folks uncomfortable.

Unfortunately this reaction is the product of the modern “balanced” view of reporting – that all points of view deserve equal exposition, even if some are unprovable, or are even patently false, because there are no facts, merely opinions. Surprisingly, it is often these who are the most absolute in their espousing of moral and patriotic virtues who seem to want to adopt this relativistic approach to the truth.

Thus we get news broadcasts that are written by the subjects of the story, and don’t get a journalist’s reasoned analysis of the truth or efficacy of the propositions stated therein.

Lest you think that I am trying to avoid condemnation completely, let me add this, There can be bias in the way that facts are presented. On this count those who complain may have me; one can appear biased without being so.

I picked up the body of the bulletin from another’s correspondence, and the way that the facts – that is the votes themselves – were summarized in a table made it apparent that one party seemed to consistently favor the veterans point of view better than the other. Without that summary table, you, the reader, would have had to draw your own likely same conclusions from the raw list of “voting percentages”, something you are quite capable of without me or the table.

Yet, if the table represents a bias in presentation, then I apologize. Full disclosure. I am a registered Democrat who was a lifelong Republican, and believe absolutely in the two-party system: I want good Republicans and good Democrats in Congress. I am also the editor of the newsletter of this non-partisan organization, the very status of which depends upon our remaining non-partisan, and I am devoted to that goal.

So, I’ll take the gig on display of the facts, but take no gig on the listing of the facts. If we cannot honestly display and discuss the truth of issues, then we are wasting our time, and I am wasting your time as a reader. You need neither pabulum nor a diatribe. What you do need is information on how everyone in this nation, politician or just plain citizen, is dealing with serving military, veterans, and their families. You need also to know how you can help our brothers and sisters in their struggle. That is why we are here and that is what I intend to do.

I thank those who spoke up for their concern, most often expressed not as condemnation, but out of worry that we were not sticking to our non-partisan charter.

For all sins of omission or commission in past publications I apologize, and I promise to continue to strive toward a truly non-partisan and truthful discussion of the issues, wherever that discussion may take us.

But always regardless of whose ox gets gored. [Ed.]

Reveille - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

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. 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 SCOOK@VUFT.ORG.

Assembly - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

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](#) "Join" 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 rhandy@vuft.org or the Vice Chair at scook@vuft.org. Watch for details at www.vuft.org

Mail call - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

TRICARE Fraud Warning

TRICARE is warning members not to share their personal or financial information with anyone who approaches them, claiming that they are collecting fees or other funds on behalf of TRICARE or selling TRICARE-related products. TMA says members should only give information when they have made contact with TRICARE themselves. If you suspect that someone is misusing your personal information, contact the Federal Trade Commission's ID Theft Hotline at 1-877-438-4338 to file a report. There are also tips and a list of resources to help you protect your identity on the [TRICARE Website](#).

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

Every one has been on August recess. They have come back this week but are champing at the bit to get away for the campaigns so don't expect much. In the midst of working hard to pass commemorative coin legislation, and to get the law changed so that no one can slaughter horses for meat in the US, they managed to pass at least one bill that is important to us.

AMENDMENT PASSES PROVIDING MORE FUNDING TO TREAT BRAIN TRAUMA

September 7, 2006

(Washington, DC) In a major victory for soldiers suffering head trauma, a bi-partisan amendment put forth by Senators George Allen (R-VA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), and cosponsored by Larry Craig (R-ID), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, received unanimous approval by the U.S. Senate on Thursday. The legislation increases the amount of funding for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center to \$19-million dollars, which is \$12-million more than requested by the Administration in the Department of Defense Fiscal '07 Appropriations bill.

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/senatecvanews/senatecvanews09-07-06.htm>

RETREAT – NEWS

After Year in Iraq, Massachusetts National Guard Soldiers Face 18-Hour Bus Ride Home

Lisa Wangsness - Boston Globe - Aug 30, 2006

August 28, 2006 -- For at least a year, the soldiers had survived one of the most dangerous jobs in the world: driving trucks on the violent roads of Iraq for the US Army. Half the company had been at it nearly two years. But when the 150 soldiers in the

Massachusetts-based 220th Transportation Company , 94th Regional Readiness Command , arrived at Camp Atterbury in Indiana just after midnight Friday for demobilization, they were told they would have to take the bus home -- an 18- to 20-hour ride. <More at:

www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2006/08/28/after_year_in_iraq_soldiers_face_18_hour_bus_ride_home

California-Based Marine Battalion Deploys to Iraq for 4th Tour

John Koopman - San Francisco Chronicle - Sep 04, 2006

Tears flow as loved ones bid goodbye to unit members in Twentynine Palms

Twentynine Palms, California -- Sometimes, there are just no words. In a parking lot baked by the desert sun, a young Marine stands in line waiting to get on a bus. A young woman walks with him. They hold hands. They stare intently into each other's eyes, trying to communicate something that cannot be said. Her hand grips his arm, her knuckles white. Finally, they reach the door. He gives her one last kiss. It's a long kiss, but the men behind him say nothing. They are not in a hurry. The bus, painted white with no markings, will take the young lover and his buddies to an Air Force base. They will board a passenger jet and make their way to Kuwait. And then, Iraq.

It's a scene played out regularly at the world's largest Marine base, on the southern edge of the Mojave Desert. The war in Iraq has been going on for less than four years, but this is the fourth time these Marines -- members of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment -- will be deployed there. <More at: www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/09/03/MNG1NKUN0M1.DTL>

Republican Backs His Stand on Iraq by Deploying

Randal C. Archibold September 5, 2006

TUCSON, Aug. 31 — Jonathan L. Paton is preparing to go to war in Iraq.

Mr. Paton has told his 77-year-old father, in a telephone conversation punctuated with sobs and pauses, how he wishes to be buried, if it comes to that. He has shot endless rounds at a police firing range, courtesy of the president of the National Rifle Association, who lives here. He has endured hugs, sometimes uncomfortably long, from well-wishers who offer prayers, concerned looks and forced smiles.

And, of course, he has been to send-offs, like the one the other night at Pima County Republican Party headquarters, where he was saluted for public service and received assurances that he would win the election. Election?

Mr. Paton, running for his second two-year term in the Arizona House, is one of four Republicans in his district's primary on Sept. 12 who are competing for two seats. The balloting occurs five days after Lieutenant Paton, an intelligence officer in the Army Reserve, is due at Fort Benning, Ga., to prepare for a five-month to six-month tour in Iraq and, maybe, Afghanistan. <More at: www.nytimes.com/2006/09/05/washington/05deploy.html>

Army Touts Recruiting Turnaround

Associated Press | September 09, 2006

WASHINGTON - The Army says its success in enlisting new Soldiers this year, after a dismal 2005, is innovative salesmanship by a bigger team of recruiters and financial incentives like bonuses of up to \$40,000.

The Pentagon announced Friday that the Army met its recruiting goal for August, which a senior Army official said makes it virtually certain that the service will achieve its aim of signing up 80,000 new Soldiers for the full recruiting year, which ends Sept. 30. Last year the Army fell short for the first time since 1999.

"We're reaching out a lot better," said the official, Maj. Gen. Sean Byrne, director of military personnel management. The Army is making better use of the Internet, for example, to reach more young people, he said.

The Army also has put about one-third more recruiters on the street, and Congress approved new financial incentives for enlistees, including signing bonuses for some slots of as much as \$40,000. The Army also began allowing people as old as 42 to enter the service. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,112962,00.html>

Army Tries Private Pitch For Recruits

Renaë Merle - Washington Post Staff Writer - September 6, 2006; A01

LANCASTER, Pa. -- Bill Schulz flipped through a list of Army careers, carefully watching the reaction of Tim Mathis, the 19-year-old construction worker perched next to him. When the potential recruit shrugged in disinterest, Schulz quickly moved to the next job, pointing to those that had the highest signing bonuses or might generate the kind of experience future employers will value.

"We're going to find you something you like," Schulz said.

For more than a year, Schulz, 59, has worked for Serco Inc., a company hired by the Army to test how well private headhunters do compared with the enlisted men and women who do the job. If the sales pitch works, the Army gets a new recruit, Serco gets paid and Schulz is rewarded. In July, he received a bonus of nearly \$10,000 from Serco after signing up nine recruits, a company record that also earned him an invitation to speak to a group of military recruiters about his success.

<More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/05/AR2006090501508.html>

Army Sees Batches of Graying Recruits

Knight Ridder | August 28, 2006

COLUMBIA, S.C. - It turns out that this is your father's Army, after all. And your mother's, too.

While they haven't rushed to recruiters' offices, older folks are signing up for the Army now that the service has raised its enlistment age to 42 for both the Reserve and active duty. At Fort Jackson, the Army's largest basic training center, graying recruits are even joining up with their sons and daughters.

For the older troops, enlisting in the Army is an opportunity to pursue a dream that's been set aside because they had to support a family.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," said Pfc. Russell Dilling, 42, a father of four, including two sons who are in the Army. "I've been living with regret for 23 years."

Forty-one-year-old Pvt. Margie Black, who has three adult daughters and a 9-month-old granddaughter, quit her job as a corrections officer to enlist. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,111573,00.html>

Bankruptcy bill comes back to haunt U.S. troops

Sirotablog – Working for Change – 9.1.06

Back in 2005, when the credit card industry lobbyists were corraling Republican and Democratic lawmakers to vote for the corporate-written Bankruptcy Bill, Sen. Dick Durbin offered an amendment to preserve existing protections for troops serving in Iraq. National guardsmen, for instance, sometimes are forced to take a pay cut from their regular jobs when they are called into service and deployed overseas. Lord knows our soldiers serving in Iraq have enough to worry about - and gutting their bankruptcy protections while they were deployed was something Durbin thought was unacceptable. So did U.S. military experts.

As retired Navy captain Chalker W. Brown told the New York Times months before the vote: "The last thing you want is a young sailor programming a Tomahawk missile in the Persian Gulf who is worrying about whether his car is being repossessed back home." Unfortunately, only 38 of Durbin's Senate colleagues agreed with him, and his amendment was defeated.

<More at: www.workingforchange.com/blog/index.cfm?mode=entry&entry=69F04DA3-E0C3-F090-A4D84BACC2AE49F9>

Cosby, in Newark, tells vets they deserve better health care

Wayne Woolley - September 07, 2006 - Star-Ledger Staff

Actor and comedian Bill Cosby wears many hats these days: supporter of education, scourge of gang violence -- even critic of the way some young African-Americans speak. Add veterans' advocate to the mix.

Cosby told about 100 veterans at a rally in Newark yesterday he doesn't think the federal government is doing enough to support the men and women who have fought in America's past and current wars.

"I can't believe they bring home our warriors and then turn out the light on them," said Cosby, a Navy veteran. "People coming home sick and not allowed to be. This is a cause no one can deny."

The veterans responded to Cosby's words with shouts and applause. Their rally was organized by [Operation Firing For Effect](http://www.operationfiringforeffect.org), a national grassroots organization that's pushing for increased funding for veterans' medical care.

<More at: www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?base/news-4/115760923883820.xml&coll=1>

Board backs unified military health care

Tom Philpott- Columnist Everett, WA Daily Herald - September 9, 2006

The Air Force, the only service opposed to creation of a Unified Medical Command, saw its arguments attacked during Wednesday's meeting of the Defense Business Board, a group of outside management experts that advises Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The board unanimously recommended that Rumsfeld immediately appoint a task force to oversee establishment of a Unified Medical Command by January 2007, a year sooner than Defense officials had planned.

The command would take charge of all direct-care health services of the Army, Navy and Air Force. It would streamline medical logistics; purchasing; information technology; research and development; facility operations; and the education, training and assignment of medical personnel. The services would continue to control medical care in support of front line units and field hospitals. But Level III operational medicine, which includes all fixed military hospitals and clinics, would be run by the new command reporting directly to the defense secretary.

<More at: http://www.heraldnet.com/stories/06/09/09/100bus_f1philpott001.cfm>

Of course, If you want to really support the troops, just open up a payday loan shop

Predatory Lenders Hit 20 Percent of Soldiers

William M. Welch - USA Today - Aug 31, 2006

Pentagon sees risk in troops' loan debt

As many as one in five members of the armed services are being preyed on by loan centers set up near military bases that can charge cash-strapped military families interest of 400% or more, a new Pentagon report has found. Steep lending charges have long plagued servicemembers, but the problem has become a more urgent concern to the military as it has struggled to fill its ranks during the Iraq war. That's because debt troubles can keep troops from going overseas. Full Pentagon Report:

http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/Report_to_Congress_final.pdf

<More at: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-08-30-military-loans_x.htm>

To the Color - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Purpose
9/5-22		Constitution Ave & 14 th St NW Washington DC	Camp Democracy	Veterans of the Iraq War and Other Conflicts; Military and Gold Star Families	
9/15		Bellevue, KY	Resource Fair	Iola Green 859*572*6226 x6231	National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Event
9/15		Titusville, FL	Resource Fair	Mary Shaboo 813-979-3556	ditto
9/15-16		Colville, WA	Resource Fair	Ken Walden 509-685-6140	ditto
9/15-17		White City, OR	Stand Down	Kathleen Patterson 541-665-4001	ditto
9/15-17		Cumberland, RI	Stand Down	Al Signorelli 401-383-4730	ditto
9/18		Marion, IL	Resource Fair	Dean Huber 618-997-5311	ditto
9/19		Akron, OH	Resource Fair	Laura Dunlop 330-762-7328	ditto
9/22		Indianapolis, IN	Resource Fair	Charles Haenlein 317-951-0688	ditto
9/22		Tampa, FL	Resource Fair	Mary Shaboo 813-979-3556	ditto
9/22		Cherry Hill, NJ	Resource Fair	Thomas Weber 856-795-3372	ditto
9/22		Rocky Hill, CT	Resource Fair	James McKinnon 860-721-5832	ditto
9/22		Eugene, OR	Resource Fair	David Stone 541-954-4931	ditto
9/22-24		Fresno, CA	Stand Down	Robert Beebe 559-287-3456	ditto
9/26		Savannah, GA	Resource Fair	Sally Eddins 478-272-1210 x2648	ditto
9/28		Tacoma, WA	Resource Fair	Mark Mascho Jr. 253-798-7449	ditto

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

N.C. lawyers plan project to aid veterans

Associated Press

GREENSBORO - Lawyers are preparing a volunteer project aimed at helping North Carolina's growing number of veterans. The Young Lawyers Division of the N.C. Bar Association over the coming year will provide training for lawyers and law students, and hopes to hold free legal clinics for veterans.

There are about 760,000 veterans in North Carolina, a figure that could swell to 800,000 by 2010, said Charles Smith, director of the state's Division of Veterans Affairs. Many of them will have injuries related to their service.

"A lot of people are coming back from Iraq with injuries that would have killed them (in earlier wars)," said Craig Cannon of the Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice firm in Winston-Salem, who is helping organize the effort. "But now they have brain damage or eye damage or whatever. What better project to do than this?"

<More at: www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/news/local/15435864.htm>

70's Law Costs 61,000 Military Widows \$1,000s in Survivor Benefits

Lizette Alvarez - August 19, 2006

As many as 61,000 military widows whose husbands died of causes relating to their military service lose out on thousands of dollars a year in survivor benefits because of a law that dates from the 1970's. Widows and retirees have spent decades trying to persuade Congress to change the law, which hits hardest at the widows of lower-ranking service members and is referred to by many critics as the "widow's tax."

The Senate passed such a change last year and again this year as part of the military authorization bill. But House leaders oppose the change because of its steep price tag, nearly \$9 billion over 10 years, Senate legislative aides from both parties say. A change was not in the military bill that passed the House, but lawmakers who support the change are hoping to make it part of the bill's final version, which is now being worked on by a bipartisan Congressional committee.

"My husband thought he was securing my future," said Edie Smith, a member of the Gold Star Wives, a group of military widows who are lobbying to change the law. "He didn't realize his own disability would void the benefit he purchased for me."

<More at: www.truthout.org/docs_2006/081906C.shtml>

Agent Orange Study Ends After 24 Years

Associated Press | September 07, 2006

ROCKVILLE, Maryland - Government health advisers debated Thursday what should be done with data and other material generated by a 24-year federal study of the health effects of exposure to Agent Orange. The study involving veterans who served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War is set to end later this month, at least partially closing another chapter on the war.

<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,112741,00.html>

Justice for G.I.s?

Friday, September 8th, 2006

Three years after returning from Iraq with persistent ailments they believe were caused by inhaling uranium dust from exploded U.S. shells, a group of former New York National Guardsmen finally got their first day in court this week against the federal government. In a two-hour hearing late Wednesday before Manhattan Federal Judge John Koeltl, lawyers for the eight veterans argued that the Army caused the soldiers' illnesses when it violated its own safety protocols and exposed them to radioactive depleted-uranium dust. Army doctors also covered up information about any exposures and failed to provide the soldiers proper medical treatment, the lawyers claimed.

The case is the first to reach a courtroom from Iraq war soldiers claiming harm from depleted uranium - a low-level radioactive metal the Pentagon began using during the first Persian Gulf War to harden artillery shells so they could penetrate enemy tanks.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Cronan, representing the Army, urged Koeltl to dismiss the lawsuit immediately. Cronan repeatedly referred to a 1950 Supreme Court decision, commonly known as the Feres Doctrine, that prohibits soldiers from suing the government for injuries "incident to [military] service."

<More at: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/col/story/450535p-379084c.html>>

Vets Exposed to Radiation Lose Ruling

Knight Ridder | August 29, 2006

WASHINGTON - Radiation exposure took Alice Broudy's husband a generation ago. This week, a court ruling sliced away at her bid for redress.

In a quiet ruling that nonetheless resonates nationwide, a federal appellate court rejected efforts by Broudy and others seeking claims on behalf of "atomic veterans." The same court simultaneously rejected bids by other veterans exposed to biological and chemical agents. Taken together, the dual rulings by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals will likely impede many veterans hoping for compensation. At the very least, it will complicate future claims.

"It's a significant ruling," Washington-based attorney David Cynamon, who represented veterans in both cases, said Friday. "Unfortunately, it's a significantly bad ruling." <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,111575,00.html>

Former Chief Judge of Veterans' Court Says Veterans Should be Allowed to Use Attorneys in the VA Claims Process

Frank Q. Nebeker, the former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims, supports legislation to allow veterans to use attorneys in all phases of the VA claims process. Judge Nebeker sent a letter to Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, stating his arguments. In the letter he stated in part:

"I am ... informed that you may have some misgivings as to the wisdom of permitting lawyer representation of veterans for initial claims for benefits. The purpose of this letter is to shed some light on what is really at stake in this legislative effort from the perspective gained from my eleven years as Chief Judge of this Court. I submit respectfully that it demeans our veterans to impose upon them a paternalistic policy which carries the inescapable implication that they lack sufficient intelligence and commonsense to choose between VSO representation and retained counsel with respect to their personal claims."

<More at: <http://www.veteransforamerica.org/index.cfm/Page/Article/ID/7794>>

Program Helps Wounded Vets Find Jobs

American Forces Press Service | Samantha L. Quigley | August 29, 2006

Washington D.C. - Severely injured servicemembers and their spouses are seeing doors open to meaningful civilian careers, thanks to a partnership between the Defense Department and the private sector. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, DoD's Military Severely Injured Center and Military.com -- a private organization that provides information and serves as a networking hub for current and former military people, defense workers and their families -- are co-sponsors of "Hiring Heroes."

Hiring Heroes helps connect servicemembers with DoD and other federal agencies, as well as civilian companies, with significant positions to fill. But it's not just a career fair, Mark Smith, chief of the Recruiting Assistance Division of the Defense Department's Civilian Personnel Management Service, said. <More at: www.military.com/features/0,15240,111627,00.html>

It's the Law: Returning Reservists and National Guard Veterans Get Their Jobs Back

David Hendricks - San Antonio Express-News (Texas) - Aug 24, 2006

When military reservists or National Guardsmen finish an active-duty deployment, they are briefed about their rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA. USERRA means that if they had to leave their job because they were called up, they should receive the same job and benefits from their previous employer as if they had never left.

Not receiving the same briefing are the employers, who sometimes are caught by surprise when Johnny comes marching home.

Some businesses find it more difficult than others to comply with USERRA. Large companies usually can accommodate returning veterans because they have the flexibility to shift personnel. Small companies, however, usually must fill the position vacated by a military reservist or National Guard member immediately. When veterans are released from military duty, small companies can least afford to rehire former employees. If a company employs five people, for example, it may be financially painful to add a sixth when the veteran returns.

"The employer may say in normal conversation, 'I don't have an opening right now. Check back in two weeks,'" said labor employment law specialist Cynthia Benedict, a lawyer in the San Antonio office of Fulbright & Jaworski.

"No. That doesn't work with USERRA," Benedict said. USERRA covers every business down to those with only one employee, she stressed. <More at: www.mysanantonio.com/business/stories/MYSA082306.01E.BIZhendricks.veterans.26f8c14.html>

Penalized for serving their country

The Gazette BRIAN NEWSOME August 31, 2006

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. -- A year ago, Jessica Cramer was pulled away from class at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs to assist victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

When she returned from New Orleans more than two weeks later, a couple of instructors took an unsympathetic view of her departure, she said, even though she went as a member of the Colorado Air National Guard. Her grade in communications dropped from an A to a B, due to a combination of poor attendance and difficulty making up a test.

Other deployed students, she said, were not allowed to make up science labs, given failing grades and forced to drop classes.

In extreme cases, the bad grades or uncompleted classes meant repayment of financial aid and the loss of GI Bill assistance.

<More at: www.gazette.com/display.php?id=1321039&secid=1>

Taps - Passings and War Statistics

WWII Hero Gabaldon Dies

Associated Press | September 05, 2006

MIAMI - Guy Gabaldon, who as an 18-year-old Marine Private single-handedly persuaded more than 1,000 Japanese soldiers to surrender in the World War II battle for Saipan, has died. He was 80.

Using an elementary knowledge of Japanese, bribes of cigarettes and candy, and trickery with tales of encampments surrounded by American troops, Gabaldon persuaded soldiers to abandon their posts and surrender. The scheme was so brazen - and so amazingly successful - it won the young Marine the Navy Cross, and fame when his story was told on television's "This Is Your Life" and the 1960 movie "Hell to Eternity." <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,112344,00.html>

National Guard and Reserve Mobilized as of September 6, 2006

This week, the Navy and Air Force announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Army and Marine Corps numbers decreased. The Coast Guard number remained the same. The net collective result is 6,829 fewer 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 88,313; Navy Reserve, 6,014; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 6,988; Marine Corps Reserve, 7,342; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 315. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 108,972, 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/Sep2006/d20060906ngr.pdf.

OIF/OEF - HACK DATE SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2006

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	2,667
*WOUNDED US [EST. NO DoD UPDATE SINCE 8/18]	≥19,945
KILLED UK	118
KILLED OTHER COALITION	115
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	645
KILLED CONTRACTORS	349
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 35,361
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 46,307
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 200,000+

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	335
WOUNDED/INJURED US	957
KILLED COALITION	199
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	597
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	32,034

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

* Because the US does not report injuries and sicknesses, the total of "injured all causes" is estimated to be >40,000.

To see the demographic data on the casualties go to www.militarycity.com/2000casualties

Absence Of America's Upper Classes From The Military

Opinion - Kathy Roth-Douquet - August 3, 2006

Thanks to Sen. John McCain's youngest son checking into Marine Corps boot camp, the number of Congress members with enlisted children will skyrocket a whopping 50 percent. He joins the armed forces with two other enlisted and a few officer children of those serving in Congress in this nation at war, meaning that in all, about 1 percent of U.S. representatives and senators have a child in uniform. And the Capitol building is no different from other places where the leadership class of this country gather -- no different from the boardrooms, newsrooms, ivory towers and penthouses of our nation. Less than 1 percent of today's graduates from Ivy League schools go on to serve in the military.

Why does it matter? Because, quite simply, we cannot remain both the world's great power and a robust democracy without a broad sense of ownership -- of all classes but particularly the leadership classes -- in the military. Our military is too consequential, and the implications of our disconnect from it too far-reaching. We are on the wrong path today.

Those who opine, argue, publish, fund and decide courses of action for our country rarely see members of their families doing the deeds these leaders would send them to do, deeds which have such moment in the world. These deeds hardly begin and end with the Iraq War -- 200,000 U.S. troops are deployed in 130 other countries around the world, keeping it "flat," in Thomas Friedman's phrase. They train other nation's security forces, help keep the peace, provide humanitarian assistance, rescuing Americans from Lebanon, standing ready to go to Darfur if sent, to go wherever the country calls on them for assistance -- in short they do the complex work of the world's sole superpower. Yet these doers are strangers to most of us, and the very missions they do are mysterious.

When the deciders are disconnected from the doers, self-government can't work as it should. Most of these decisions about whether and how to use the U.S. military are hard, and we need to be as best equipped to make them as possible. We need to be intellectually capable -- have real knowledge about what the military in fact does, but we also need to be morally capable, which means we need a moral connection to those Americans we send into harm's way. Moreover, we need the largest pool of talent from which to draw those troops. Military work must not simply become fee for service.

A Duke University study demonstrates that it matters whether civilian decision makers have military experience: A review of U.S. foreign policy over nearly two centuries shows that when we have the fewest number of veterans in leadership and staff positions in Congress and the Executive branch, we are most likely to engage in aggressive (as opposed to defensive) warfighting. And we are most likely to pull out of conflicts early.

A study by the eminent military sociologist Charles Moskos shows that the population of a democracy is not willing to sustain military engagements over time if the leadership class does not also serve in the armed forces. Its lack of service sends a signal that the conflict is not vital, or worthwhile. Since we don't know what conflicts will come -- or which party will be in power when they do -- these findings should matter to all of us.

The Triangle Institute of Security Studies has tracked the growing disconnect between the military and the leadership, and finds evidence of a growing distrust of both groups toward each other. The group in America that reports having the lowest opinion of the military is the elites: They are almost six times more likely than members of the military to say they would be "disappointed if a child of mine decided to serve."

In past wars -- even long-haul wars like the Cold War -- the Kennedys, the Bushes, the Sulzbergers of The New York Times served. Sure, there were always shirkers, but many did join their middle-class and working-class compatriots. Today narrow self-interest, a sense of "other priorities" or a misguided sense of moral preference means most of the upper class never considers military service.

In my own travels talking about this issue, the most problematic comment I've come across is an idea expressed by many, including many in the upper classes, that it is somehow more moral to refrain from military service than to serve, because that way one can avoid an "immoral" war.

There are so many problems with this statement. Certainly it shows a misunderstanding of military service. Military service is not about our political opinions (which can after all be wrong). The oath given at the "pinning on" ceremony for a second lieutenant or a general involves not a promise to fight a particular war or support a given president but to protect and defend the Constitution. That 230-year-old piece of paper says that the people elect representatives who deploy the military as part of the political process. Young men and women who join the military do not know what future conflicts or engagements will bring. They even know that some of the decisions that flow from the deciders will be flawed, because people are flawed.

But service members also know that Americans will be sent to do the nation's bidding. And we want those who are sent to act with skill, judgment and integrity. Many of those who serve see that Americans are being sent to act in agency of our country and say, as the famous sage Rabbi Hillel said, "If not me, who?" Military service is not a political statement. Democrats did not rush to sign up when Clinton became president, and wealthy Republicans didn't suddenly join when Bush was elected. Military service is service to the country, and even more perhaps, service to your fellows.

But how can we expect privileged young people to do military work? Military work is dangerous. You could be asked to kill or be killed. It is fraught with the risk of being sent into an unpopular conflict, as many now understand Iraq to be. Why should the children of our leadership classes or those ambitious for leadership chose such a path, when there are so many better options available to them?

In World War I, one of Congress's stated reasons for proposing a draft was that without it, too many of the upper-class children would rush to service, and we'd lose the leadership class of the country. In 1956 a majority of the graduating classes of Stanford, Harvard and Princeton joined the military, and most were not drafted. Leadership was then understood to have a moral dimension -- the cry "follow me" was more convincing than "charge!" Those who aspired to future leadership saw service as a hallmark of credibility.

As a country we have stopped presenting military service as a principled statement. We sell it instead as a job opportunity, one from which those with "better options" are excused. We need to revisit our stance on who should serve, and why. All members of our elites need not serve, just a representative number, enough to bring the leadership in line with the rest of the country, to bring the wisdom and perspective that in the aggregate can come with experience and responsibility. With such leaders, with such a military, we will be a stronger, fairer, better country. With such leaders, the enlistment plans of young Jimmy McCain need not seem so surprising.

Kathy Roth-Doquet co-wrote "AWOL, The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service and How It Hurts Our Country" (Harper Collins, 2006).

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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