

SOUND OFF!



VOL. IV, NO 9

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

"VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER"

25 DECEMBER 2008

FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

SHORT ONE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

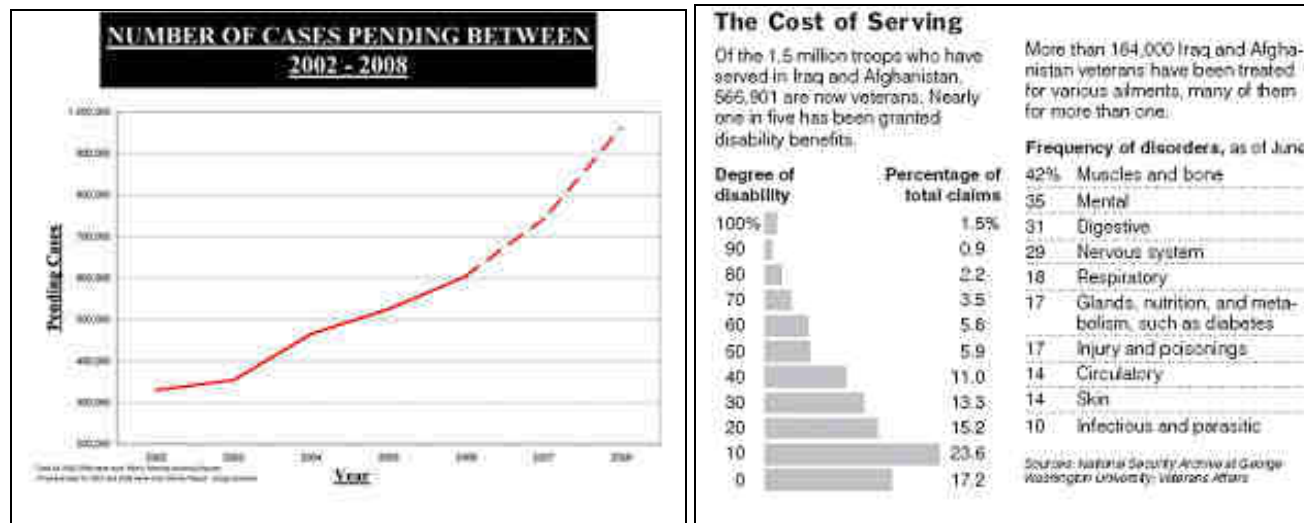
This issue will be very short as I, like you, need to spend time with the family for the holidays.

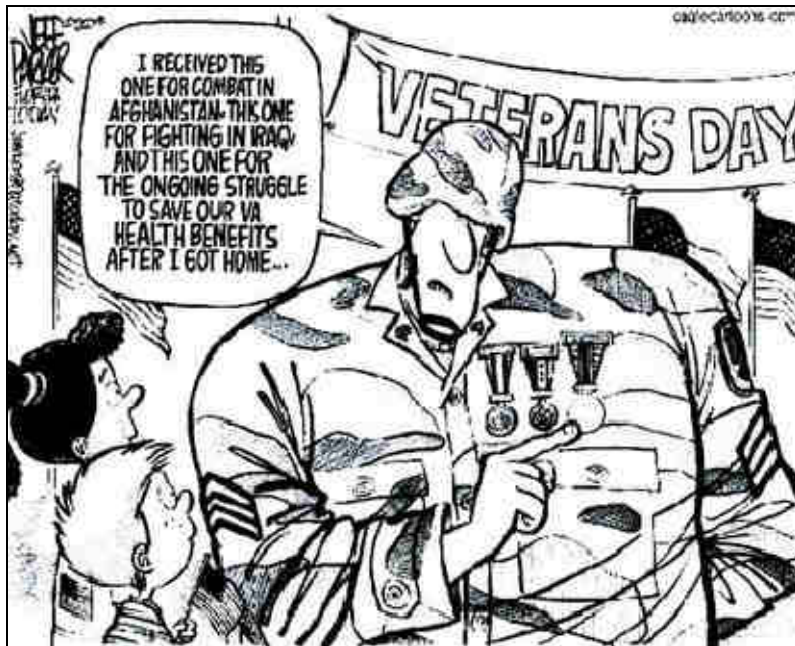
So: Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, (a 12-weeks late) joyous Eid Al Fitr, Happy Kwanzaa, a riotous Winter Solstice.

With all the fuss about the "War on Christmas", I thought I would just have a war on all of them that I could think of.

With thanks to "[Veterans Today](#)", here are some pictures to keep you thinking over the holidays (whichever one you might be celebrating):

JUST IN CASE YOU THOUGHT THINGS WERE GETTING BETTER





REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

NEED LEGAL HELP IN AN APPEAL TO THE DVA?

Try these two websites: Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm. United States Court of appeals for Veterans Claims “Public List of Practitioners” are members of the court’s bar www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/

LAST CHANCE FOR A 2008 TAX DEDUCTION!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

OUR APPEAL TO THE Circuit court **has begun** and we have to have executive board members attend the court hearings to observe, and probably to testify.

These trips cost money – to date the expenses have largely been borne by the individuals.

We have to begin paying our way as an organization. Please donate whatever you can by going on-line to:

[HTTP://WWW.VUFT.ORG/DONATE.HTML](http://www.vuft.org/donate.html)

WAKE UP! SPREAD THE NEWS!

Membership is open, free, and very worthwhile! Get your fellow veterans, and veterans’ family members to join VUFT! We are beginning to be heard, and we need you to help us get the message out. If each of us would bring in one new member every month, what an impact we could have!

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

VCS - VUFT LAWSUIT UPDATE:

Class Action Suit: Our advocates are currently working on the appeal to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Case Progress to Date:

7/23/2007 Suit filed w/Federal District Court
9/25/2007 Defendant's Motion to Dismiss
2/11/2008 Motion for Preliminary Injunction
2/25/2008 Preliminary Injunction Hearing
4/21/2008 Trial
6/25/2008 Judgment based on jurisdiction

7/25/2008 Appeal notice filed w/9th Circuit Court of Appeals
12/10/2008 Appeal brief filed
12/15/2008 *Swords to Plowshares* and *Vietnam Veterans of America* file amicus briefs
12/22/2008 *Military Spouses for Change* and *United Spinal Association* file amicus briefs

Here is a link to the legal [documents](#) on the lawsuit.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE LA VETERANS HOME

You have all received our appeal to legislators to stop the land grab at the LA National Veterans Home. We hope that you have written your letters and passed the action along to friends organizations. If we don't defend veterans, who will?

BE A MEMBER If you are getting this newsletter and have not yet joined, please go to [our website](#) and join. Membership is free. The more our numbers grow, the greater voice we have. It shouldn't be that way, but it is, so join us and help us take the fight to Congress and the state legislatures. Please encourage your friends who either are veterans, are related to veterans, or who support veterans' causes to [join VUFT, Inc.](#)

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE If you wish to donate to our work you may now do so via PayPal or Visa on [our website "Donate" page](#). Every little bit helps. We are a 501(c)(3): your donations are deductible on your federal taxes. You can also buy our handsome pins using the same method. If you wish to volunteer your services to the organization, please contact the Chair at rhandy@vuft.org or the Vice Chair at scook@vuft.org. Watch for details at www.vuft.org

**DO YOU PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO ANYONE?
IF YOU DO. PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU SEND IT TO
NO NAMES, JUST NUMBERS**

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

No letters this issue

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES HEARING DATE FOR GENERAL ERIC SHINSEKI, TO BE SECRETARY OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Hearing: Nomination of General Eric Shinseki to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs

January 14,

10:00am

Senate Dirksen, Room 106

Hearing on the nomination of Eric Shinseki to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs

RETREAT - NEWS

SHINSEKI PROMISES TO OVERHAUL VETERANS AFFAIRS

Jason Leopold The Public Record Dec 08, 2008

President-elect Barack Obama's choice of retired Gen. Eric Shinseki, a Vietnam War veteran who sustained combat-related injuries, to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs sends a clear message to the hundreds of thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans that, unlike President George W.

Bush, Obama takes the sacrifices they have made seriously.

"When I reflect on the sacrifices that have been made by our veterans and I think about how so many veterans around the country are struggling even more than those who have not served -- higher unemployment rates, higher homeless rates, higher substance-abuse rates, medical care that is inadequate -- it breaks my heart, and I think that General Shinseki is exactly the right person who is going to be able to make sure that we honor our troops when they come home," Obama said in an interview on "Meet the Press" on the 67th anniversary of the attacks on Pearl Harbor. At a news conference in Chicago Sunday where he introduced Shinseki, Obama said "there is no one more distinguished, more determined, or more qualified to build this VA than the leader I am announcing as our next secretary of Veterans Affairs -- General Eric Shinseki," Obama said at a press conference. "No one will ever doubt that this former Army chief of staff has the courage to stand up for our troops and our veterans. No one will ever question whether he will fight hard enough to make sure they have the support they need."

Shinseki said the military "deserve a smooth, error-free, no- fail, benefits-assured transition into our ranks as veterans and that is our responsibility, not theirs."

He promised veterans that he will "work each and every day to ensure that we are serving you as well as you have served us. We will pursue a 21st century VA that serves your needs."

<More at: <http://www.pubrecord.org/nationworld/543-shinseki-promises-to-overhaulveterans-administration.html>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

Date	Time	Where	What	Who	Notes
		Nada			

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

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

AND HERE'S ANOTHER ONE

SUIT: U.S. DENIED VETERANS' CLAIMS

Chris Mondics - Philadelphia Inquirer - Dec 22, 2008

December 22, 2008 - Lawyers with Center City's Morgan Lewis & Bockius have filed a class-action suit against the Department of Defense, alleging that it illegally denied medical and disability benefits to Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

The lawsuit said the Army failed to follow its own rules when it denied the services and payments to the veterans.

"Almost two million U.S. armed services personnel have been deployed around the world as part of the U.S. efforts to combat global terrorism," said the lawsuit, filed in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington. "Countless thousands of these service men and women have been exposed to traumatic events during combat, and many have returned home with a variety of psychological and mental injuries."

... The class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of five Army veterans along with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, a nonprofit group that represents veterans and active service members in disputes with the government.

The veterans allege that they each were discharged from duty after an Army review board concluded that they had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and thus could no longer serve.

Yet, in violation of federal law, the suit contends, the veterans' disabilities were not rated severe enough to qualify them for both ongoing disability payments and medical coverage for themselves and their families.

<More at: http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20081222_Suit_U_S_denied_veterans_claims.html>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE TUESDAY 23 DECEMBER 2008

NOTE: STATISTICS FOR WOUNDED ARE GETTING SHAKIER - DOD REVISES NUMBERS – DROPS NON-HOSTILE “OTHER”

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2,106 DAYS)		OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2,635 DAYS)	
KILLED US	4,213	KILLED US	629
WOUNDED US [12/06/08]	30,871	OTHER CASUALTIES US [12/06/2007]	2,605
OTHER US CASUALTIES [12/06/08]	≥44,551	KILLED COALITION	408
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [12/06/08]	169	WOUNDED US [11/01/08]	7,293
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	1	WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2/2007)	1,602
KILLED UK	178	KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED OTHER COALITION	138	KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (7/2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	1,819	WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (7/2004)	32,034
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [11/9/08]	1,182	AFGHAN REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	1.75M/4.8M
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 47,555		
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS [12/23/08]	≥ 98,218- 658,227		
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS [11/9/08]	≥ 400K – 1.374M		
IRAQ REFUGEES INT./EXT. [9/27/07]	2.1M/2. 5M	COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE	\$582,088,872,763

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

* This entry has been changed to “Non-mortal casualties” which includes wounded, non-hostile casualties, and diseased where medical air transport was required. To see detailed demographic data on the casualties go to

<http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

** Includes 280 additional contractor casualties reported in international press but not in US official figures

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACTIVATED AS OF DECEMBER 10, 2008

This week the Army, Marine Corps and Navy announced an increase, while the Air Force announced a decrease. The Coast Guard number remained the same. The net collective result is 2,889 more reservists activated than last week. At any given time, services may activate some units and individuals while deactivating others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 97,824; Navy Reserve, 5,885; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 11,080; Marine Corps Reserve, 8,536; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 858. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 124,183, including both units and individual augmentees. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated can be found at www.defenselink.mil/news/Dec2008/d20081209ngr.pdf.

AFTERTHOUGHTS ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

THE MARINES ARE RIGHT AND THE ARMY IS WRONG

December 4, 2008: The U.S. Army is under increasing pressure to use six month combat tours, rather than the

here: [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/SecDef Memo - Signed \(24 Nov 08\).pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/SecDef Memo - Signed (24 Nov 08).pdf).

<More at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12371>>

ADD-ON ~ STUFF OF INTEREST

‘GLORY’ UNIT FROM CIVIL WAR REACTIVATES

Associated Press - November 21, 2008

NOTICE

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

VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

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Want to join us? Please apply for membership at www.vuft.org It's FREE!

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